

“OLD IN SUBSTANCE AND NEW IN MANNER”: THE SCULTORI AND GHISI  
ENGRAVING ENTERPRISE IN SIXTEENTH-CENTURY  
MANTUA AND BEYOND

by  
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Part 1

### **Abstract:**

This dissertation seeks to reframe the way in which the prints of the *incisori Mantovani*, Giovanni Battista (1503-1575), Adamo (1530?-1587) and Diana Scultori (1547-1612), and Giorgio Ghisi (1520-1582), are examined. Previously, their contributions in the printmaking process, largely engraving prints that are after the designs of other artists, have been dismissed as reproductive. This dissertation examines the ways in which these printmakers worked to elevate their engravings from simply reproductive to creative works of art in their own right. Their engravings, which certainly took inspiration from the designs of Giulio Romano, among others, were not the product of a close collaboration between a master and the engravers. Instead, the engravers appear to have worked fairly autonomously, in Mantua and elsewhere, engaging with and manipulating their source material, experimenting technically and in the design of their prints, and finally questioning the role of engraving within the greater framework of artistic practice in the sixteenth century.

Chapter one examines the work of Giovanni Battista, who used printmaking as a creative outlet, seeking a freedom not possible in his other sculptural projects that were carried out according to the specifications of patrons and artistic masters. His engravings can be seen as an attempt to “conquer” these outside influences. Chapter two considers the prints and career of Adamo Scultori, who used his prints to comment on the “enslavement” of reproductive printmakers to their sources. Chapter three focuses on the engravings of Giorgio Ghisi, who explored the artistic power of “re-animation,” creating prints that resulted from a careful interweaving of other artists’ work with his own

inventive contributions. Finally, chapter four examines the work of Diana Scultori, who sought to assert her learning through her prints and prove herself as an “initiate” into a literate community. In many of their prints, these four printmakers looked to achieve their ends through the inclusion of specific details that grounded the subjects of their prints, often biblical or historical in nature, within a specific sixteenth-century context. In doing this, they imbued their prints with an enhanced appeal by adding multiple meanings, celebrating the potential that printmaking held as an artistic medium.

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## **Introduction**

In the sixteenth century, Mantua was neither a large metropolis, such as Rome or Florence, nor a small town, but a city, which thanks to the Gonzaga family, was full of architectural treasures and a significant number of important works of art. The riches of Mantua and its sophisticated intellectual community arguably tempered the training of its artists and their process of artmaking, especially, the *incisori Mantovani*. These include Giovanni Battista Scultori (1503-1575), his son, Adamo (1530?-1587), his daughter, Diana (1547-1612), and a family acquaintance, Giorgio Ghisi (1520-1582). While scholars have also included Andrea Andreani (1558/9-1629), Pietro Facchetti (1535-1619) and others within this group, the Scultori, along with Giorgio Ghisi, appeared to have worked at various times as a unit and often from common visual sources, making them a compelling group to consider in a cohesive study.<sup>1</sup> Taken together, their lifetimes span just over a century, from 1503, when Giovanni Battista was born, until 1612, when Diana died, and their careers occur during arguably the most important period of development within the history of printmaking.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> On Andreani and Facchetti, see Michel Bury, *The Print in Italy: 1550-1620* (London: British Museum, 2001): 221 and 225. Carlo d'Arco includes Andreani in his study, *Di Cinque valenti incisori Mantovani del secolo XVI* (Mantua: Ferdinando Elmucci, 1840): 53-63; 117-125.

<sup>2</sup> Within the sixteenth century, printmaking transformed from being a fairly new technology to one that was widely used and celebrated. In his *Mondi* of 1552, Anton Francesco Doni observed: "Today it is no longer that way, because printing has been discovered in our age, . . . if a book is finished, it will be impossible to lose half of what is printed. If the world does not come to an end all at once, it would be impossible to destroy all the books, containing our statues, paintings, names, families, cities and all of our doings and knowledge, and you see in drawings [and prints] our faces and clothing, our cities, the instruments of our arts, and all the things, large and small, that we know how to say and do. Now everyone has them, they are printed and reprinted, whereby our discovery of printing is that Hydra of which, when one head is cut off, seven more sprout up." (Venice: F. Marcolini, 1552): 27 as cited in Rebecca Zorach, *The Virtual Tourist in*

However, more important than their bonds of family and friendship to this study is their common pursuit of printmaking as a creative enterprise in which they were active, rather than passive, participants. They made prints inspired by Giulio Romano and other Mantuan and non-Mantuan artists, while infusing their work with their own alterations, however minor. In this process, they worked to re-introduce the work of these masters, all the while asserting their own Mantuan provenance. This distinction is especially important when considering prints made and distributed outside of their home city, and in many cases, in Rome.

Giovanni Battista's continued expression of himself as "Mantuan" is all the more intriguing given that he was not from Mantua originally, but from nearby Verona.<sup>3</sup> He appears to have come to Mantua as a youth in order to pursue work with Giulio Romano in the decoration of the Palazzo Te, and seems to have settled there with his family, making at least two documented trips back to his hometown in 1544 and 1573, towards the end of his life.<sup>4</sup> Giovanni Battista trained Adamo, Diana and Giorgio Ghisi in the art of printmaking and, as this dissertation will show, likely established a modest printmaking workshop in Mantua. While printmaking was the chief artistic pursuit for Adamo and Diana, it was not for Giovanni Battista and Giorgio Ghisi, who both worked as damasceners of arms and armour, with the former also working as a sculptor. It would

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*Renaissance Rome: Printing and Collecting the Speculum Romanae Magnificentiae* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008): 79.

<sup>3</sup> Valeria Pagani, "Review of *Adamo Scultori and Diana Mantovana* by Paolo Bellini," *Print Quarterly*, 9 (1992): 72. See also notes 4 and 5 below.

<sup>4</sup> The first trip is noted by Antonino Bertolotti, *Figuli, fonditori e scultori in relazione con la corte di Mantova nei secoli XV, XVI, XVII* (Bologna: Forlì, 1969): 75. The second trip to Verona is documented in two different letters, one of which is written by Giovanni Battista from Verona, to the Duke of Mantua. He writes that "My son, Adamo, has sent me the enclosed and because I wish to honor your Lordship and out of loyalty I show them to you, from Verona on the 9<sup>th</sup> of September of 1573." ASMn. Archivio Gonzaga, Busta 1507, Number 233.) A second letter discusses a project on which Giovanni Battista is working in Verona, ASMn. Archivio Gonzaga, Busta 2589, 610.

appear that Giovanni Battista at least turned to engraving as a creative outlet, seeking to make art independent from his many collaborative projects. Giovanni Battista's primary work, at least at the beginning of his career, was as a sculptor, making the stucco decoration with Primaticcio in the Camera degli Stucchi at the Palazzo Te, under the direction of Giulio Romano.<sup>5</sup> It will be proposed here that for Giovanni Battista printmaking was an escape from the role of assistant and an opportunity to be master.

The work of these four artists is so frequently discussed within the *cadre* of studies on Giulio Romano (circa 1499-1546).<sup>6</sup> A looming presence in Mantua at this time, these four printmakers certainly felt the shadow of Giulio Romano, engaging with his designs as source material. Yet, Giulio's presence was equally limited to the shadows: he was not intrinsically involved in the printmaking process, nor does he seem to have taken any real interest in it.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Vasari notes his youthful work in the Camera degli Stucchi (he was only 21 when he started) and the departure of Primaticcio to the French palace of Fontainebleu in 1530. Giorgio Vasari, *Lives*, ed. Gaston de Vere, 6 (London: Macmillan and Co, 1912-1915): 157. The payment records related to the Palazzo Te and the Palazzo Ducale confirm that "Giovanni Battista Veronese," almost certainly Giovanni Battista Scultori, was paid weekly on at least 44 separate occasions in 1531, 1533 and once for work he did for Isabella d'Este's funeral in 1539. The dates of payment are as follows: 31 August, 1528 (290-291), 5 January, 1531 (350), 21 January, 1531 (352), 28 January, 1531 (354), 18 February, 1531 (358), 25 February, 1531 (359), 4 March, 1531 (360), 11 March, 1531 (362), 17 March, 1531 (363), 24 March, 1531 (364), 1 April, 1531 (366), 8 April, 1531 (367), 15 April, 1531 (368), 22 April, 1531 (370), 29 April, 1531 (374-5), 6 May, 1531 (376), 13 May, 1531 (378-79), 20 May, 1531 (381-82), 27 May, 1531 (385-86), 3 June, 1531 (388-89), 10 June, 1531 (391-92), 17 June, 1531 (393-95), 23 June, 1531 (395-96), 1 July, 1531 (398), 8 July, 1531 (400), 15 July, 1531 (402-3), 22 July, 1531 (405), 19 August, 1531 (415-16), 9 September, 1531 (419-20), 14 October, 1531 (449-51), 28 October, 1531 (466-468), 4 November, 1531 (471-73), 11 November, 1531 (478-80), 9 December, 1531 (483-4), 14 February, 1533 (537-38), 8 March, 1533 (542-43), 15 March, 1533 (544), 22 March, 1533 (545-46), 29 March, 1533 (546-47), 5 April, 1533 (550-51), 12 April, 1533 (551-52), 6 December, 1533 (609-10), 12 December, 1533 (610-11), 8 May, 1539 (817-8). *Giulio Romano: repertorio di fonti documentarie*, ed. Daniela Ferrari (Rome: Ministero per beni culturali e ambientali, 1992).

<sup>6</sup> For a discussion of this, see Stefania Massari, *Giulio Romano: pinxit et delineavit* (Rome: Fratelli Palombi, 1993).

<sup>7</sup> It is conceivable that Giulio Romano may have been affected by the scandal surrounding *I Modi* and Marcantonio Raimondi's imprisonment, choosing not to invest himself significantly in the printmaking process.

The connection between Giovanni Battista and Giulio Romano was established as early as the sixteenth century by Giorgio Vasari, who observed in the life of Giulio Romano, that the printmaker:

...Engraved a vast number of things by Giulio, and in particular besides three drawings of battles engraved by others, a physician who is applying cupping glasses to the shoulders of a woman, and the flight of our lady into Egypt, with Joseph holding the ass by the halter, and some angels bending down a date-palm in order that Christ may pluck the fruit. The same master engraved, also after the designs by Giulio, the wolf on the Tiber suckling Romulus and Remus, and four stories of Pluto, Jove and Neptune, who are dividing the heavens, the earth, and the sea among them by lot; and likewise the goat Amaltheia, which, held by Melissa is giving suckle to Jove, and a large plate of many men in prison, tortured in various ways.<sup>8</sup>

Vasari's list of prints by Giovanni Battista is inaccurate: many of these prints mentioned above are not identifiable as being by this printmaker, or were actually engraved by Giovanni Battista's protégés and other craftsmen.<sup>9</sup> His description of the Scultori family in his second edition is also misleading, given that he erroneously includes Giorgio Ghisi as one of Giovanni Battista's sons, an error that led to centuries of confusion over the Scultori family name:

Thus, to that Giovan Battista Mantovano, an excellent sculptor and engraver of prints,..., have been born two sons, who engrave copper-plates divinely well, and what is even more astonishing, a daughter, called Diana, who also engraves so well that it is a thing to marvel at; and I who saw her, a very gentle and gracious girl, and her works, which are most beautiful, was struck with amazement.<sup>10</sup>

Owing to Vasari's misidentification of Giorgio Ghisi as a son of Giovanni Battista, Diana and her brother Adamo, as well as her father, were for the greater part of the seventeenth

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<sup>8</sup> Vasari, *Lives*, vol. 6, 164-165.

<sup>9</sup> For example, Ghisi engraved the physician, while Diana engraved the goat Amaltheia. The authorship of the Prisoners is contested, and could have been by Giovanni Battista, Adamo, or Ghisi.

<sup>10</sup> Vasari, *Lives*, vol. 8, 42.

until the nineteenth century usually identified as members of the Ghisi family.<sup>11</sup> It is customary now to refer to Giovanni Battista, Adamo and Diana by the surname of Scultori.<sup>12</sup> For reasons unknown, Giovanni Battista and Adamo, at least, used some variation of the name “Scultori” when signing works of art, completing contracts, and in personal correspondence.<sup>13</sup>

Vasari’s discussion of Giovanni Battista’s prints after Giulio Romano does not detail the relationship between the two artists, nor does it allege that the master was directly involved in the printmaking process in any way. Even if Giulio Romano were involved in the printmaking process, his general working method would have been to oversee from a distance. It has been suggested that Giulio Romano so dominated the Mantuan artistic scene that most of Giovanni Battista’s prints reproduce the models set by the master.<sup>14</sup> Florian Härb has suggested more accurately that the division between master and follower is more nuanced: although Giovanni Battista took Giulio’s designs as a departure point, he typically “developed from it an original composition.”<sup>15</sup> Giulio was a prolific draughtsman, using drawings as a vehicle to disseminate his designs among his assistants in Mantua and beyond.<sup>16</sup> This efficient method allowed Giulio to oversee many of the artistic projects throughout Mantua and its region, naturally following the

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<sup>11</sup> For example, Adam von Bartsch, in his nineteenth century *Le Peintre Graveur*, conflated the surnames and some of the engravings of Giovanni Battista, Adamo, Diana and Giorgio Ghisi in his catalogue. Evelyn Lincoln, *The Invention of the Italian Renaissance Printmaker*, New Haven 1999, 178, n. 39.

<sup>12</sup> Gioconda Albricci, “Le incisioni di Giovanni Battista Scultori,” *Print Collector*, 33/34 (1976): 11.

<sup>13</sup> Pagani, “Review,” 74.

<sup>14</sup> Albricci, “Incisioni,” 10.

<sup>15</sup> Florian Härb, “Giulio Romano und die Druckgraphik,” *Fürstenhöfe der Renaissance: Giulio Romano und die klassische Tradition*, exh. cat., eds. Sylvia Ferino and Konrad Oberhuber (Vienna: Kunsthistorisches Museum, 1989): 194-208.

<sup>16</sup> Filippo Baldinucci, *Notizie dei professori di disegno*, 5 (Florence: 1769): 3; Jacopo da Strada acquired a selection of drawings, including those related to goldsmith work designed by Giulio Romano from the artist’s son, Raffaello, before his death in 1562. J. F. Hayward, “Ottavio Strada and the Goldsmiths’ Designs of Giulio Romano,” *The Burlington Magazine*, 112 (1970): 14. (10-14) Frederick Hartt, *Giulio Romano* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1958): 257.

workshop model set by Giulio's own master, Raphael. In a letter to Duke Federico Gonzaga (dated 23 May, 1538), Aurelio Recordati writes that Giulio was engaged in "designing and assigning tasks to many men who all live off his employ, whom he has no time to deal with except to give them a daily look-in."<sup>17</sup> It has been observed that over the course of his time in Mantua, Giulio collaborated with other artists less and less, his interest shifting "from the composition's final outcome to its invention."<sup>18</sup>

However, Giulio Romano's involvement in the printmaking process appears to have been even less than to those projects that, at least, warranted a daily look-in. Given the important potential that these prints might have held in disseminating Giulio Romano's genius, it is striking that he would not invest more in ensuring his satisfaction with the prints. It is also remarkable that there are no documents surviving in the fantastically well-organized Mantuan archives that attest to his involvement in the printmaking process. Many of the drawings that likely served as the basis of prints after his work by these four printmakers were for insignificant projects and small sections of much larger schemes, such as individual cartouches in the Camera degli Stucchi, the Camera delle Aquile, the Camera dei Venti and the Appartamento del Giardino Segreto at the Palazzo Te. Giovanni Battista likely gathered these drawings in the occasional work that he did in service to Giulio Romano. It is highly unlikely that Giulio Romano was involved directly with the printmaking process.<sup>19</sup> Instead, Giovanni Battista and his

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<sup>17</sup> Amedeo Beluzzi and Kurt Forster, "Architect at the Gonzaga Court," *Giulio Romano*, exh. cat., ed. Manfredo Tafuri (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998): 123.

<sup>18</sup> Belluzzi and Forster, "Architect," 123.

<sup>19</sup> Michael Bury notes: "Giovanni Battista, although taking Giulio's work as his starting point would, more often than not, develop from it an original composition. We are not left with a very convincing picture of close collaboration between Giulio and printmakers...On the other hand, during his Mantuan period there were many printmakers and print publishers, as far away as Rome and Fontainebleau, who were eager to use his designs. At present, we cannot know whether he had any direct responsibility, or played any sort of

protégés appear to have worked much more independently than has been previously thought.

Such autonomy appears to have extended even to the way in which they “published” their prints.<sup>20</sup> While their contemporaries in Rome and Venice were working with publishers, such as Antonio Lafreri, these four printmakers appear to have been self-publishing, at least in the case of the prints made in Mantua. Ghisi worked with the publisher, Hieronymous Cock, in Antwerp in circa 1549-50, and Lafreri later in his career.<sup>21</sup> As will be discussed in detail, Adamo, perhaps drawing on his experience in Mantua, became a publisher himself in Rome, entering into a partnership with Lafreri between 1573-6. Diana completed a limited number of commissions for Claudio Duchetti, one of Lafreri’s heirs, but very few of her prints bear any contemporary publisher’s marks. She appears to have retained many of her plates up until her death in 1612, at which time they were sold on to other publishers.<sup>22</sup> Based on the absence of contemporary publisher’s marks on so many of their prints, it would seem that these four printmakers were not only deciding which prints to engrave (typically the role of a commissioning publisher), but also, largely, printing them too. A few factors likely informed their decision to make their prints in this way. The relative geographical isolation of Mantua may have necessitated such a measure. Additionally, print publishers

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active role in encouraging this...The question of Giulio’s involvement with printmaking needs further careful research...”. “Giulio Romano and Prints,” *Print Quarterly*, 11 (1994): 65.

<sup>20</sup> As Bury points out, the term “publisher” is problematical, beginning with the fact that there was no comparable word for this role in the Renaissance. Lafreri, for example, was described as a printer or print dealer. *Print*, 10. While such printers did not, according to Bury, “dominate in a way that suppressed individuality or stifled independent activity,” one should still recognize that such figures likely held a tremendous amount of power in the promotion and dispersal of prints. In the absence of a more suitable word to describe the activities of publishing and publishers, I will continue to use the term throughout this dissertation, under the consideration of Bury’s caveat.

<sup>21</sup> Suzanne Boorsch, *The Engravings of Giorgio Ghisi*, exh. cat. (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1985): 17.

<sup>22</sup> This is based on research from my Master’s Dissertation on Diana Scultori, The Warburg Institute, 2002. This can be concluded by tracing the publisher’s marks on the various states of the prints.



did not boast the best of reputations, known, at least at the end of the sixteenth century, for their “counterfeiting” and copying of other artists’ work.<sup>23</sup> By printing their own work, the Scultori and Giorgio Ghisi could control the dispersal of their engravings, deciding when and where to re-issue them, and crucially, exclusively retain the profits from sales.

As Giulio Romano was not directing this printmaking enterprise, then it would appear to have been the printmakers themselves who were, for the most part, determining the subject of their prints throughout their careers. Certainly, a significant factor must have been the availability of source material, such as that amassed by Giovanni Battista from his work as an assistant to Giulio Romano, but also explaining the many collaborations that Adamo and Diana Scultori, along with Giorgio Ghisi, forged with other artists. A certain portion of their work could be considered more sexually explicit, and while none of their prints are as erotic as *I Modi* or even *Two Lovers*, a painting now in the Hermitage Collection, some viewers might have recalled the salacious scandal surrounding their designer, Giulio Romano, and in turn caused the work of the *incisori Mantovani* to have had added celebrity. Certainly, in 1823, Pope Leo XII deemed some of their prints to be “lewd” enough to warrant the destruction of their plates, held in the Papal collection, including Ghisi’s *Venus and Adonis* and his *Angelica and Medoro*, among others.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> As noted by Rebecca Zorach, “Freely copying the works of others, as Lafreri did, and replacing an earlier publisher’s address with one’s own, were common practices... Court cases, anecdotes and accusations show that printmaking was a highly competitive business, and nowhere more than in Lafreri’s milieu in Rome.” *Virtual*, 15. This is also ably explored by Valeria Pagani in her article considering the aftermath of Lafreri’s death: “The Dispersal of Lafreri’s Inheritance,” *Print Quarterly*, 25 (2008): 1 (1-23) ASR, Tribunale criminale del Governatore di Roma, Costituiti, 26 October 1577-18 January 1578, vol. 245, fol. 21v-23, 36-38r.

<sup>24</sup> “The Government Engraving Institute of Rome,” *The Printing Times and Lithographer*, 9 (1883): 94.

Whatever the subject, the relative autonomy of these four printmakers, and Giovanni Battista especially, granted them an opportunity to engage with and manipulate their source material, experiment technically and in the design of their prints, and finally to question the role of engraving within the greater framework of artistic practice in the sixteenth century. Previous scholarship, with the exception of that focused on Ghisi, has largely denied the creative and inventive contributions made by these printmakers. This dissertation seeks to correct this, and identify the way in which these four printmakers each sought to insert themselves into the making of images that have largely been dismissed as “reproductive”.<sup>25</sup>

At the center of this consideration of the *incisori Mantovani* is the recognition that the definition of “reproductive” printmaking has become increasingly more problematical and nuanced in recent years. Historically, if a print had been identified as reproductive, any original contributions made to the composition by the printmaker were often dismissed. For example, in her review of Bellini’s catalogue on Adamo and Diana Scultori, Phyllis D. Massar notes:

Bellini’s “technical and stylistic observations” seem rather scanty, but since both Adamo and Diana were essentially skilled reproductive engravers, there may be less to say about their style or technique than there was about that of their contemporary, Giorgio Ghisi.<sup>26</sup>

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See also Paolo Bellini, *L'opera Incisa Di Giorgio Ghisi*, exh. cat. (Basano del Grappa: Tassotti Editore, 1998): 146 and 149.

<sup>25</sup> For an introductory summary of the subtle appearance of “reproductive” prints, see Peter Parshall and David Landau, *The Renaissance Print: 1470-1550* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1994): 162-168. For a consideration of Vasari’s dismissive views of “reproductive” prints, see David Landau, “Vasari, Prints and Prejudice,” *Oxford Art Journal*, 6 (1983): 3-10. See also Thomas Ketelsen, “A Drawing for Giulio Bonasone's Print after Titian's 'Entombment',” *The Burlington Magazine*, 138 (1996), 446-453. See also David Alexander, “After-Images: A Review of Recent Studies of Reproductive Print-Making,” *Oxford Art Journal*, 6 (1983): 11-17.

<sup>26</sup> Phyllis D. Massar, “Review of *L'opera incisa di Adamo e Diana Scultori* by Paolo Bellini,” *The Burlington Magazine*, 134 (1992): 670.

Massar's remark typifies much of the previous scholarship concerning Adamo and Diana, made possible through a mistaken perception that these engravers changed little in the engraved re-imaginings of their source material, a significant mischaracterization at least in Diana's case. As Michael Bury has rightly observed:

The idea that a large part of the print production of sixteenth-century Italy can be dismissed on the grounds that it was "reproductive," and motivated by simple commercial considerations, continues to pervade studies in the field.<sup>27</sup>

More recently, Bury has suggested that the term, "reproductive," is actually anachronistic, and, as in the case here, "tends to mislead rather than assist the historical understanding."<sup>28</sup> In a recent study, Norberto Gramaccini proposed that there are different phases of reproductive prints in the history of sixteenth-century printmaking, including a "dialogue" phase, an "interpretative" phase and a phase of "translation".<sup>29</sup> As the work of these printmakers can testify, especially Diana's, these may be less chronological phases and more modes in which a printmaker might engage with his original source.<sup>30</sup> It would seem that the *incisori Mantovani* are not alone in suffering from this mis-conception. For example, Jeremy Wood's study of Giulio Sanuto explores the negative effects of such a label.<sup>31</sup> Ultimately, the contributions of the *incisori Mantovani* and many of their colleagues have been lost as a result of this mis-categorization.

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<sup>27</sup> "Beatrizet and the 'Reproduction' of Antique Relief Sculpture," *Print Quarterly*, 13 (1996): 111-126.

<sup>28</sup> Bury, *Print*, 10-11.

<sup>29</sup> Norberto Gramaccini and Hans Jacob Meier, *Die Kunst der Interpretation; italienische Reproduktionsgrafik 1485-1600* (Berlin and Munich: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2009).

<sup>30</sup> Michael Bury, "Italian Reproductive Prints," *Print Quarterly*, 27 (2010): 322.

<sup>31</sup> "Cannibalized Prints and Early Art History: Vasari, Bellori and Fréart de Chambray on Raphael," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 51 (1988): 210-220.

However, it is not only the printmakers' creative contributions that are missed in these circumstances, but perhaps also the intended audiences for the prints. If one were to see these prints as mere copies of other works of art, then one does not look for subtle changes, nor question the reason for such alterations. Certainly, a principal audience who likely worked (whether collected or borrowed) from many of these prints were other artists. Gian Pietro Bellori noted that Nicholas Poussin benefited greatly at an early age from such prints:

This Lord [Courtois] delighting in drawing, and having collected the most rare prints of Raphael and Giulio Romano, was generous with them, and insinuated them into Nicholas's soul, who imitated them with such ardor, and the most exact diligence, that the forms and design impressed themselves in him no less than the movements, inventions, and other marvelous gifts of these masters.<sup>32</sup>

While it is tempting to believe that the prints after Giulio Romano mentioned here might be those executed by the *incisori Mantovani*, it is also more important to note the role such prints played in Poussin's training and the way in which Bellori describes this role. His deliberate use of the word "impressed," "s'impresse" in his description of the way in which the "forms and design" affected the artist suggest a poetic notion of transfer, as if Poussin's mind were the paper on which these engravings were printed. Unfortunately, to conclude that Poussin and other artists were the *only* appreciative collectors of these "reproductive" prints encourages a very limited understanding of the subjects of these remarkable works, and in many case, limits the subject of each print to a single, formal, reading. A primary objective of this dissertation is to demonstrate the extent to which

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<sup>32</sup> "Non per questo Nicolò restò senza maestri, e gli fù favorevole la sorte nella conoscenza del Cortese Matematico Regio, il quale all' hora haveva luogo nella galleria del Louro. Questo signore diletlandosi del disegno, havendo raccolto le più rare stampe di Raffaele e di Giulio Romano, ne fece copia, i le insinuò nell' animo di Nicolò, il quale con tanto ardore, essatissima diligenza le imitava che non meno s'impresse il disegno, i le forme, che li moti, i l' inventioni, e l' altri parti mirabili di questi maestri." Gian Pietro Bellori, *Le vite de' pittori scultori e architetti moderni* (Rome: Mascardi, 1672): 409.

many of these prints are not “reproductive” and to prove that, instead, the prints, because of design deviations, frequently take on additional meanings.

As in the case of Lord Courtois above, the alterations made to the compositions of these prints may have attracted a much wider, and possibly very different, audience. As Mitchell Merback has observed, and which is certainly applicable to the work of these four printmakers:

Sixteenth-century collectors sought in the Renaissance print several kinds of pleasurable experiences — the pleasure of discovering an author’s *inventio* (concept) embedded in a tangle of referents, the pleasure of marveling at exquisite workmanship carried out on an incredibly small scale — and they found these pleasures lodged inside a commodity that was agreeably portable and adaptable to a range of practices.<sup>33</sup>

In attempting to create such “pleasurable experiences” for viewers, it can be shown that these printmakers pushed the boundaries of what it meant to be a printmaker in sixteenth-century Italy, each in their own way.

The subjects of the prints by the *incisori Mantovani*, with their nuanced additions and interpolations, can be interpreted variously, opening the prints to multiple readings simply not possible in the original source material. These multivalent readings are not mutually exclusive, nor are they necessary to one’s enjoyment of the technical quality of the work. Any ambiguity found in the subjects of these prints, at times fostered by the printmaker’s alterations, allowed for multiple readings, provided one was armed with the relevant knowledge. Additionally, ambiguities may have been especially important if the print were to be used as a model for other artists. Such ambiguity would have been still more important if the subject of the print could reflect on contemporary religious, political or social events, a potentially dangerous position in a world of seemingly ever-

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<sup>33</sup> Mitchell Merback, “Nobody dares: freedom, dissent, self-knowing and other possibilities in Sebald Beham’s *Impossible*,” *Renaissance Quarterly*, 63 (2010): 1037-1105.

changing loyalties. As Patricia Emison has remarked, prints were “crucial to the inauguration of politically or ethically controversial art...” given that they were “less obliged to obey strict ideas of decorum.”<sup>34</sup> As Merback has convincingly observed, “they became not only the most likely arena for this liberalization to unfold, but the only one in which it could be pushed as far and as fast as it was.”<sup>35</sup> This dissertation seeks to offer some alternative readings of certain prints not explored previously, many of which are grounded in the events and people of the sixteenth-century. The works of these four artists celebrated the remarkable characteristics of prints, including their mutability and transportable qualities.

Michel Foucault described the history of intellectual thought according to epistemic modalities, characterizing the sixteenth century especially as a period that privileged similitude. One of these “similitudes” is “*convenientia*,” described by Foucault as convenience, and which

come sufficiently close to one another to be in juxtaposition: their edges touch, their fringes intermingle, the extremity of the one also denotes the beginning of the other. In this way, movement, influences, passions and properties too, are communicated. So that in this hinge between two things, a resemblance appears. A resemblance that becomes double as soon as one attempts to unravel it: a resemblance of the place, the site upon which nature has placed the two things, and thus a similitude of properties; for in this natural container, the world, adjacency is not an exterior relation between things, but the sign of a relationship, obscure though it may be.<sup>36</sup>

A similitude of *convenientia* might be a valuable lense through which to view the many meanings of the prints examined here. The composition of many of these prints, often

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<sup>34</sup> Patricia Emison, “Prolegomenon to the Study of Italian Renaissance Prints.” *Word & Image*, 11 (1995): 2.

<sup>35</sup> Merback, “Impossible,” 1100.

<sup>36</sup> Michel Foucault, *The Order of things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*. (London: Tavistock Publications, 1970): 20.

enhanced by captions, is the hinge for the multiple readings possible of each subject. The multiple readings are adjacent to each other, held together by the form of the composition. While the subject of a print might appear first to be a depiction of a biblical or historical event, it could also be seen to reference a contemporary happening or intellectual debate, with special relevance to the printmaker responsible for the engraving.

The similitude of *convenientia*, of adjacency, is also applicable to a wider view of the printmakers and their artistic network. Their prints acted as an indisputable catalyst for artistic transaction and the transmission of ideas and forms. Giulio Romano might have made a drawing of a subject that was subsumed into a print by one of these printmakers, which in turn was used to inspire the design on a maiolica vase, for example, wherein the print acted as the transmitter of Giulio's design, the hinge. The medium of printmaking allowed for these "hinges" to reach a wider audience than ever before. The self-fashioned identity of these artists communicated by certain aspects within their prints demonstrates their full understanding of their function within this transaction.

In 1826, Johann von Wolfgang Goethe wrote that "there is no patriotic art and no patriotic science. Both belong, like everything good, to the whole world and can be promoted only through general, free interaction among all who live at the same time."<sup>37</sup>

Stephen Grenblatt suggests that Goethe's observation was

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<sup>37</sup> Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *The Maxims and Reflections of Goethe*. Trans. by T. Bailey Saunders (New York and London: Macmillan and co., 1893): 163.

based upon a canny insight into the restless process through which texts, images, artifacts, and ideas are moved, disguised, translated, transformed, adapted, and reimagined in the ceaseless, resourceful work of culture.<sup>38</sup>

Greenblatt's suggestion is crucial to a better understanding of how the *incisori Mantovani* intended for their prints to be interpreted and "read," reflecting the restlessness of their compositions. By basing many of their prints on the initial designs of Giulio Romano, a Roman transplanted to Mantua, the *incisori Mantovani* demonstrated the fluidity with which *romanitas* could become a quality of Mantua. By then transporting their art and plates back, in most cases, to Rome, they re-introduced Roman art through the lens of Mantua.<sup>39</sup> This instance of "cultural mobility" recalls the traditional account by which scholars examine the *translatio imperii*, that is

the translation of power and authority from the Persians to the Greeks, from Greece to Rome, and then from imperial Rome to a succession of ambitious regimes in nascent nation states... wherein the symbols, regalia and other literal trappings of Roman imperial power were physically carried, when the empire was no longer able to defend itself, from the ancient capital of the world to a succession of new sites of global ambition.<sup>40</sup>

Remarkable to the *incisori Mantovani* is that they were executing their own *translatio imperii*, by uprooting Giulio Romano's Mantuan *romanitas* and subsuming it into their own geographical and artistic network, that is, to Rome, Antwerp, Paris, Venice, and wherever else they and their prints may have travelled. A collector of their prints, artist or otherwise, participated also in this transaction. The ultimate measure of "cultural mobility" lies in an acknowledgement that a trajectory of a thing or idea cannot be

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<sup>38</sup> Stephen Greenblatt, *Cultural Mobility: A Manifesto* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2010): 4.

<sup>39</sup> For a further consideration of this, see especially Stephen J. Campbell, "Mantegna's Triumph: The Cultural Politics of Imitation all'antica at the court of Mantua, 1490-1550." *Artists as Court: Image Making and Identity 1300-1550* (Boston: Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, 2004): 91-105.

<sup>40</sup> Greenblatt, *Cultural*, 7.



predetermined, but instead surprises in its destination, and even, its point of origin.<sup>41</sup>

Certainly, the prints of the *incisori Mantovani* are both a result and a cause of “cultural mobility,” in that they resulted from considerations of *romanitas*, a quality for which they were collected and referred to, while also replete with other, different echos and meanings.

This dissertation is not a catalogue of every print made by these four printmakers. Such catalogues have already been written for the corpus of each of these artists.<sup>42</sup> Instead, this dissertation examines select prints that reflect their interest in taking up old subjects, often inspired by other artists and rendering them in new ways, however subtle. Their contributions imbue the prints with additional meanings and indicate that they could hold different value for different audiences: they were not strictly for artists and print collectors, but could and would have been looked at by a variety of people, of various levels of knowledge.

The way in which the *incisori Mantovani* appear to have departed from their source material, and their manipulation of their compositions, reveal their keen desire to demonstrate that they excelled at their craft. Even more importantly, they sought to establish that they exceeded the status of craftsman, stretching into the realm of artistic master, with claims to learning. Pamela Smith has argued that

naturalism emerges...at moments of most intense artisanal self-assertion, and in early modern Europe, artisans employed naturalism in order to make claims about their status as active knowers, about their knowledge of nature, and about their mode of working.”<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Greenblatt, *Cultural*, 18-19.

<sup>42</sup> These include: Boorsch, *Ghisi*; Paolo Bellini, *L'opera incisa di Adamo e Diana Scultori* (Vicenza: Neri Pozza, 1991); and Bellini, *Ghisi*.

<sup>43</sup> Pamela H. Smith, *The Body of the Artisan: Art and Experience In the Scientific Revolution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004): 8.

In the case of the *incisori Mantovani*, this desire to showcase their “artisanal literacy” is visible, not only in their prints that picture nature, such as in the landscapes and natural phenomenon in Ghisi’s prints, or in the way in which the printmakers sought to enliven their prints after classical sculpture, but also in their ongoing celebration of engraving as an artistic medium. As Smith continues, “naturalistic representation emerges equally out of a desire to deceive,” celebrating both the representation of nature, as well as the processes behind it.<sup>44</sup> In many of the prints explored in this dissertation, a careful viewer can identify multiple instances in which the printmaker draws attention to the *process* of engraving. These instances are comprised of passages within prints where the artists have cut incredible, seemingly impossible lines, and meta-thematic references to the act of engraving, with special attention paid to the burin, the tool with which the artists created their visual deceptions.

In their quest to “remake themselves as practitioners of the liberal arts,” and demonstrate their extensive knowledge of nature in its many forms, the *incisori Mantovani* explored the scope of their art and their role within this artistic process.<sup>45</sup> Logically, this dissertation has been divided into four chapters, with a chapter devoted to each of these four printmakers. However, in order to best understand the individual explorations of the four artists, each chapter carries a thematic focus, informed by a small selection of prints that define the individual, their career, their corpus, and ultimately, their desire to assert their possession of *ingegno*. These themes are “conquest,” “slavery,” “re-animation” and “initiation,” and each appear literally and meta-thematically within works by these four artists. Not only can these themes be identified in the works

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<sup>44</sup> Smith, *Body*, 8 and 16.

<sup>45</sup> Smith, *Body*, 27.

examined here, but they can also be found to have bearing on the work and careers of many other sixteenth-century printmakers. Despite the fact that these four printmakers appear to have started their careers in Mantua, their experiences, careers and corpuses are representative of printmakers from all over Europe, each seeking to set themselves and their “reproductive” prints apart from the artists after which they worked.<sup>46</sup>

The first chapter is devoted to Giovanni Battista, whose *David and Goliath* print sets the thematic consideration of conquest. Giovanni Battista used the print to explore the process of conquering one’s giants in the form of artistic predecessors and sources. This chapter will also consider his *Naval Battle*, the subject of which has puzzled generations of commentators, but which may be seen to depict an important contemporary conquest, framed within the poetry of Ludovico Ariosto’s *Orlando Furioso*. The first chapter will conclude with an examination of his diminutive *Sleeping Cupid*, likely made with Isabella d’Este’s collection of Cupids in mind, an attempt to conquer ancient sculpture, and possibly even Michelangelo. Ultimately, in these, and so many of his other prints, Giovanni Battista made his engravings as an outlet for his own creative expressions.

The second chapter considers Adamo Scultori, commencing with a study of his *Allegory of Servitude*, which can be taken as a statement on the status of the Renaissance printmaker, akin to that of a slave to the artists after whom they engraved. Adamo worked as a “slave” for the entirety of his career, closely reproducing the works of other

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<sup>46</sup> One thinks here of the work of Walter Melion on Hendrick Goltzius, especially “Self-imaging and the engraver’s virtù: Hendrick Goltzius’s *Pietà* of 1598,” *Nederlands kunsthistorisch jaarboek*, 46 (1995): 104-143; “Love and artisanship in Hendrick Goltzius’s *Venus, Bacchus and Ceres* of 1606,” *Art History*, 16 (1993): 60-94; “Memorabilia aliquot Romanae strenuitatis exempla: The Thematics of Artisinal Virtue in Hendrick Goltzius’s ‘Roman Heroes’,” *Modern Language Notes*, 110 (1995): 1090-1134; “Hendrick Goltzius’s Project of Reproductive Engraving,” *Art History*, 13 (1990): 458-87.

artists. He reproduced the work of masters, such as Marcantonio Raimondi, as part of his training, at the height of his engraving career, in his prints after Michelangelo, and finally, in his work after ancient artists, the makers of carved gems. Even his work as a commercial publisher in Rome necessitated his adherence to the direction of outside influences, such as other publishers and the vicissitudes of the print market. Not interested in promoting his own *ingegno*, Adamo's method of enslaving himself to the glory of other artists appears to have been a relative commercial success.

The third chapter will explore how Giorgio Ghisi sought to qualify the importance of his artistic process in many of his works, celebrating the act of animation, and in some cases, re-animation, in the creation of his prints. Unlike Adamo, Ghisi succeeded in imbuing his "reproductive" prints with significantly original features, including creative landscapes in the backgrounds of many works.<sup>47</sup> Among his most remarkable prints, the *Vision of Ezekiel* marks not only the future re-animation of the dead on God's command, but also the way in which an artist re-animates its subjects, literally "laying sinew on bone" in the act of artistic creation. With the goal of identifying Ghisi's contributions to the design process in so many of his prints, this chapter examines the nature of Ghisi's collaborations with other artists in the making of his *Judgment of Paris*, *Venus and Adonis*, *Angelica and Medoro*, *Hercules Resting from his Labors*, *Hercules Farnese*, his *Martyrdom of St Barbara* and his most famous and puzzling print, the so-called *Allegory of Life*. For Ghisi too, like Giovanni Battista, printmaking was just one of his artistic specialties; he also worked as a damascener of arms.<sup>48</sup> His work in both prints and arms

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<sup>47</sup> Michael Bury, "On some engravings by Giorgio Ghisi, commonly called 'reproductive'," *Sixteenth Century Italian Art* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006): 4-19.

<sup>48</sup> It is difficult to measure the degree to which this occupied him, given that only two of his damascened pieces appear to have survived until the twentieth century. See pages 140 to 142 below.

decoration offered him an opportunity to explore and make the case for engraving as a category of sculpture.

Finally, the fourth chapter is a consideration of the prints by Diana Scultori, who sought, throughout her career, to be accepted into the ranks of her artist contemporaries. Her *Feast of the Gods* highlights her desire to be recognized as an initiate, both as an individual from Mantua, familiar with its artistic patrimony, and as an artist with a claim to learning and access to Papal Rome. Her print, *Christ and the Adulteress*, and her works after her architect husband's drawings, as well as her many religious prints that bear narrative captions in verse, all emphasize her quest for recognition, literally, as a woman of letters. It is telling that Diana, a married woman, ultimately appears to have been the most successful of these four printmakers, finding the fame, stability and security that they each seem to have been seeking.

The thematic divisions in each chapter are by no means exclusive to each printmaker, but they are representative of each corpus, and further an understanding of the context within which these prints were made. Many of the readings presented in this dissertation require an understanding of the political and social events of the sixteenth century, something many of the viewers of such prints at the time of their making would have possessed. In re-framing the works of other artists, these four printmakers were introducing established subjects, such as biblical stories, ancient mythologies and histories, in a fresh mode, updating them with relevant details from the contemporary world. Such an exercise granted their prints an appeal that may have led to commercial success in some instances, and capitalized on the transferable nature of prints. While their prints led to various degrees of fame and recognition, the works of these four printmakers

are undeniably and intrinsically important to the development of engraving as an independent art, however “reproductive” it might be.

## **Chapter 1: Artists and Giants: Giovanni Battista Scultori's Engraved Conquests**

In a print dated 1540, Giovanni Battista Scultori (1503-1575) captures the penultimate moment of Goliath's life. [Fig. 1] The giant's head is at the forefront of the print, his hair curling schematically around his furled face, his expertly engraved locks contrast sharply with the hard, stony ground on which his head rests. His slayer, David, straddles the giant's enormous, static body, and grips the handle of his sword with both hands, demonstrating the extreme effort required to complete the decapitation. David's tunic swirls dramatically around his diminutive frame, communicating the force with which he moves. This print is so much more than an engraved representation of a heroic and exemplary Biblical story. It is an artistic manifesto asserted by its maker: the sword should be taken as a metaphor for Giovanni Battista's burin and Goliath represents the printmaker's artistic predecessors and superiors, most especially, the larger-than-life Giulio Romano.

This engraving, which measures nearly 14 by 18 inches, is among Giovanni Battista's most technically advanced and visually impressive prints. While no preparatory drawings related to the print appear to have survived, it is typically linked to a lunette fresco of the same subject in the Loggia di Davide in the Palazzo Te, designed by Giulio and painted by Rinaldo Mantovano in 1532.<sup>49</sup> [Fig. 2] In terms of the way in which the fresco works in the larger scheme of the palazzo's decoration, Goliath's monumental stature acts as a thematic connection to the Sala dei Giganti, just three rooms beyond the Loggia. The moral carried in both the Loggia and the Sala dei Giganti seem to suggest that giants never come out victorious: in these *gigantomachia*, their enormous stature is

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<sup>49</sup> Massari, *Giulio*, 109.

futile against their opponents. Perhaps surprisingly, Scultori did not make a print related to the pendant fresco on the opposite side of the loggia, featuring a victorious David plucking his harp, the head of Goliath resting at his feet. [Fig. 3] Certainly, Scultori's passing over of this as a subject may reflect his access to the frescoes, and their related design drawings. However, it would seem instead that Scultori was extremely attentive to his chosen subjects, and arguably much more interested in how he could manipulate Giulio's design of Goliath's death.

Despite the visual link to Giulio's fresco design, Scultori makes no note of Giulio in his inscription on the David and Goliath print, instead claiming responsibility himself, signing "Mantuanus / Sculptor MDXXXX" at the lower center of the print. In the second state of this print, someone, likely a subsequent publisher, tried to scratch the "Mantuanus" out, for reasons unknown. This signature, along with the subject of the print, offers an opportunity to consider Scultori's alterations, and to hypothesize as to why he would have chosen to make such changes, not to mention returning to a subject painted some eight years earlier. Ultimately, Giovanni Battista chose this subject and altered the original design in order to make his print more appealing to a wider audience, imbuing it with multiple layers of meaning. In addition to its historical or biblical significance, there are other ways to interpret the print as a moralizing, political, and even, meta-thematical image.

The possibility of alternative understandings becomes apparent when one considers the many alterations that Giovanni Battista made to the composition in the making of his print. Goliath's vast body sprawls across the scene, much more so than in the fresco, where his body occupies only the front center of the lunette. [Fig. 1a] In the



print, Goliath's muscular arms are spread wide from one lower corner to the other, his beautifully wrought and proportionally large helmet occupying the lower right hand corner, literally superimposed over his right hand. The helmet, which sits in profile, bears an intricate acanthus design that swirls around a pouncing lioness. One such comparable existing helmet may be the Burgonet-style helmet, albeit missing its earflaps made by the Milanese armor-maker, Filippo Negroli, from 1543 in the collection at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (17.190.1720).<sup>50</sup> [Fig. 4] However, Negroli's helmet still does not boast the upward curve of Scultori's piece, peaked almost like a Phrygian cap, perhaps denoting Goliath's Eastern, Philistine origin, and his paganism.

The earflaps on the helmet bear a winged lightning bolt, which was used as a Gonzaga heraldic device. It was employed as a personal *impresa* by Gianfrancesco Gonzaga in 1480, and can be seen on the so-called "Gonzaga vase" by the Mantuan artist, Antico, in the Galleria Estense in Modena.<sup>51</sup> [Fig. 5] The winged thunderbolt appears to still be in use a century later as a Gonzaga heraldic device in the Chamber of Arrows in the Ducal Palace in Sabbioneta, the residence of Duke Vespasiano Gonzaga (1531-1591), who spent the early part of his life in the court of Philip II.<sup>52</sup> However, use of the winged thunderbolt *impresa* is not limited to Mantua alone: it also appears carved into a vestibule door in the Gallery of Francis I at Fontainebleau, as well as on the so-called "Louvre-

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<sup>50</sup> Made by Filippo Negroli (ca. 1510–1579): This helmet is signed on the browplate by Filippo Negroli, whose embossed armor was praised by sixteenth-century chroniclers as "miraculous" and deserving "immortal merit." Made from one plate of steel patinated to look like bronze, the bowl is raised in high relief with motifs inspired by classical art. The graceful mermaid forming the helmet's comb holds the grimacing head of Medusa by the hair. The sides of the helmet are covered with acanthus scrolls inhabited by putti, a motif probably derived from the Roman wall frescoes rediscovered in the Golden House of Nero. John Forest Hayward, *European Armour* (London: HMSO, 1965): cat. 26.

<sup>51</sup> A. Radcliffe, *Splendors of the Gonzaga*, Exh. Cat. (London: The Museum, 1981): 133 and A. H. Allison, "The Bronzes of Pier-Jacopo Alari-Bonacolsi called Antico," *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen in Wien*, 53-4 (1993-94): Nos. 2-4, and 10, 80-1 and 91-95.

<sup>52</sup> David S. Chambers, "A Condottiere and his Books: Gianfrancesco Gonzaga (1446-96)," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 70 (2007): 76.

school armor”, which is thought to have been made in or near Paris.<sup>53</sup> Primaticcio may have introduced the *impresa* to the French court, after having worked with Scultori in Mantua.<sup>54</sup> It is possible that Giovanni Battista was anticipating an ambiguity in whose authority the *impresa* invoked, but in any case, its placement on the helmet itself is significant. The helmet has been carefully set aside, removed from the giant and no longer in position to defend him from his imminent death. If the helmet (rather than Goliath) were to be identified as a Mantuan product, then perhaps the message can be made more clear: even a giant is lost in combat without Mantuan arms and assistance.

There is no helmet in the fresco, making its prominence in the print significant. In Scultori’s engraving, the helmet works as a counterbalance to the massive sword held by David in the opposite corner, so its presence could be explained on a purely compositional and aesthetic level. Still, its prominence could be interpreted in another way. Such a highly decorative helmet would have been complicated and expensive to produce in the sixteenth century, making it more akin to a luxury object. Many drawings survive by Giulio Romano of various designs for complicated tableware, and he and his workshop almost certainly designed armor for the Gonzaga court, much of it probably made in Antwerp or Milan.<sup>55</sup> The helmet in the print, with its possible Gonzaga connection, regardless of whether it actually existed or was fantastical, could be seen to act as an advertisement for Mantuan design and skill, and specifically that of Scultori,

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<sup>53</sup> Stephen V. Grancsay, “Royal Armorers: Antwerp or Paris?” *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, 18 (1959): 1-7.

<sup>54</sup> Grancsay, “Armor,” 78.

<sup>55</sup> Clifford M. Brown and Guy Delmarcel, *Tapestries for the Courts of Federico II, Ercole, and Ferrante Gonzaga, 1522-63*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1996): 158-173. See also *El arte del poder: La Real Armeria y el retrato da corte*, ed. Álvaro Soler del Campo (Madrid: Museo Nacional del Prado, 2010): 116-7; J. G. Mann, “The Lost Armories of the Gonzagas,” *The Archaeological Journal*, 95 (1938): 239-336; J. G. Mann, “The Lost Armories of the Gonzagas,” *The Archaeological Journal*, 100 (1945): 16-127.

who himself was a metalworker.<sup>56</sup> Scultori, in his printmaking, may be referring to his other talents, inserting a beautifully wrought helmet where there was none before. In this way, Scultori's display of the helmet recalls Giulio's display of the beautiful gold and silver plateware in the Sala di Psiche, set up on the credenza next to the bed of Cupid and Psyche. [Fig. 6] Thus, the diversity of artistic production in Mantua was advertised in its art, both in Giulio's designs and Scultori's print.

Giovanni Battista's David is not a figure at rest, full of accomplishment, like certain sculptural *comparanda*, but rather the epitome of dynamic movement. The great effort required of this David is communicated in his facial expression of intense concentration. The muscles in his back, arms and legs tense simultaneously, a physical impossibility, and his hands grip the hilt of a sword, which is seemingly as long as he is tall. The great effort of David's task, the decapitation of a giant, echoes the immense effort of David's creator, Giovanni Battista, who wielded his own metaphorical sword in the cutting of the copper plate from which this print was pulled. As if to emphasize the careful cutting action necessary in the plate's creation, fine hatched lines frame the blade of the sword. Many of the lines appear long and continuous, which is in fact fairly difficult to execute, and achieved through shorter lines that are joined up to appear unbroken. The bottom portion of the blade is shaded with short, horizontal hatch lines, further highlighting the cutting of the plate.

The fresco features two bystanders in the lower left hand corner of the lunette, who appear to be watching the action, while in the print, Giovanni Battista has inserted

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<sup>56</sup> No similar helmet appears in the scholarship, for example, in the recent catalogue of known Gonzaga arms Mario Scalini, "Le armi di 'oggiere', il danese e altre meraviglie delle armerie gonzaghesche attraverso gli inventari," *Gonzaga: La celeste galleria*, exh. cat. Mantua, Palazzo Te/Ducale, 2 September-8 December, 2002, ed. Raffaella Morselli (Milan: Skira, 2002): 369-403.

multiple soldiers, who are fleeing the scene, holding their arms and weapons aloft in surrender. Giovanni Battista's potential spectators take flight in fear, terrified by the printmaker's David, a small, but powerful, warrior. Giovanni Battista hoped to instill a respectful fear in his artistic contemporaries with his engraving skill. A further addition to the print is the gnarled tree trunk to the left of David, which fills out the space that would otherwise be the stone cliff-face. This tree trunk is a small flourish made by Giovanni Battista, a further testament to his technical skill as a printmaker.

*David and Goliath* served as an artistic model for at least one artist: a maiolica vase made by Domenico da Venezia in the collection of the Museo di Messina, thought to be from the second half of the sixteenth century, features the figures of David and Goliath, clearly derived from Scultori's print (Inv. No. A1584).<sup>57</sup> [Fig. 7] As in the print, David straddles Goliath, who lies on his back, with his right arm outstretched. David grips his sword with both hands and his tunic swirls around him. The maiolica maker has, however, changed the background to a camp with tents, and a decorated shield to the left of the fallen giant has replaced Scultori's helmet. The likeness between the print and the vase is nonetheless unmistakable and demonstrates at least one way in which Scultori's print was consulted. It is not inconceivable that a craftsman in Venice will have seen Scultori's print.

Scultori selected Giulio's *David and Goliath* as his subject not to make a reproduction of a fresco but in order to create a print that would appeal to a literate audience, and which would act as a manifesto for Scultori's own views about the status and importance of engraving. Scultori strove to single out his own prints as inventive and

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<sup>57</sup> Elena Ascenti and Giusy Larinà, *Maioliche dalle collezioni del museo di Messina* (Palermo: Assessorato dei beni culturali e dell'identità siciliana, 2010).

thought-provoking works of art. Returning to Scultori's inscription on *David and Goliath*, he intended for his print to reflect his own creative authorship, both as a sculptor and as a Mantuan. Throughout his life and work, Scultori transformed himself from a young Veronese, recorded in the Palazzo Te payment records, to "Mantuanus," signing one of his most impressive prints with a declaration of personal identity.

### **Printmaking as Creative Expression**

Scultori lived from 1503 to 1575 and worked for the majority of his career in Mantua. He was recorded as a member of Giulio Romano's workshop, working in the Camera delle Aquile between 1527-28, and assisting Primaticcio in the making of the stucco sculpture in the Camera degli Stucchi in the Palazzo Te between 1527 and 1530.<sup>58</sup> After Scultori's youthful work on the *stucchi* (for he was about 21 when he started), Vasari fails to record the additional projects on which Scultori worked, at least those under Giulio's supervision. However, the payment records related to the Palazzo Te and the Palazzo Ducale confirm that a certain "Giovanni Battista Veronese," almost certainly Scultori, was paid weekly on at least 44 separate occasions in 1531, 1533 and once for work he did for Isabella d'Este's funeral in 1539.<sup>59</sup> Additionally, he was involved in the making of the ephemeral architecture for other occasions, such as for the triumphal entry

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<sup>58</sup> Albricci, "Incisioni," 5 and Vasari, *Lives*, 157; Egon Verheyen, *The Palazzo del Te in Mantua: Images of Love and Politics* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977): 121 and 124.

<sup>59</sup> The dates of payment are as follows: 31 August, 1528 (290-291), 5 January, 1531 (350), 21 January, 1531 (352), 28 January, 1531 (354), 18 February, 1531 (358), 25 February, 1531 (359), 4 March, 1531 (360), 11 March, 1531 (362), 17 March, 1531 (363), 24 March, 1531 (364), 1 April, 1531 (366), 8 April, 1531 (367), 15 April, 1531 (368), 22 April, 1531 (370), 29 April, 1531 (374-5), 6 May, 1531 (376), 13 May, 1531 (378-79), 20 May, 1531 (381-82), 27 May, 1531 (385-86), 3 June, 1531 (388-89), 10 June, 1531 (391-92), 17 June, 1531 (393-95), 23 June, 1531 (395-96), 1 July, 1531 (398), 8 July, 1531 (400), 15 July, 1531 (402-3), 22 July, 1531 (405), 19 August, 1531 (415-16), 9 September, 1531 (419-20), 14 October, 1531 (449-51), 28 October, 1531 (466-468), 4 November, 1531 (471-73), 11 November, 1531 (478-80), 9 December, 1531 (483-4), 14 February, 1533 (537-38), 8 March, 1533 (542-43), 15 March, 1533 (544), 22 March, 1533 (545-46), 29 March, 1533 (546-47), 5 April, 1533 (550-51), 12 April, 1533 (551-52), 6 December, 1533 (609-10), 12 December, 1533 (610-11), 8 May, 1539 (817-8). *Giulio Romano: repertorio di fonti documentarie*, ed. Daniela Ferrari (Rome: Ministero per beni culturali e ambientali, 1992).

of the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V, in 1530, and again for similar festivities in 1532.<sup>60</sup> He is also thought to have been included as a benefactor in the will of the sculptor, Bernardino Germani, who died in 1560.<sup>61</sup> If he is indeed the figure included in Germani's will, then his full name is "Giovanni Battista di Giovan Antonio de'Spincheiris."<sup>62</sup>

Much of the art that Scultori created over the course of his career in Mantua was highly collaborative and was made either according to the designs of other artists, and/or was ephemeral in nature. It is thus difficult to determine the size and variety of his artistic corpus. However, it seems certain that Scultori looked to engraving as an outlet for his personal creativity and as a showcase for his own inventiveness. Despite the seemingly transitory nature of works on paper, Scultori utilized printmaking as a means of establishing a more permanent and influential legacy through the potential circulation of this material.

Giovanni Battista appears to have been taught the art of engraving by Agostino Veneziano, who was in Mantua between 1527-30.<sup>63</sup> While his entire corpus of prints is limited to 30 examples at the most, just 17 bear his monogram or name and are dated from 1527 in the earliest case, with most being produced between 1537 until 1540, with a final print dated 1551. Of these, approximately eight appear to be based, in some cases

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<sup>60</sup> Paul Murphy, *Ruling Peacefully: Cardinal Ercole Gonzaga and Patrician Reform in Sixteenth-Century Italy* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2007): 162-3; Sylvia Ferino Pagden, "The Ideal and the 'Natural' Image of Power: The Portraits of Charles V by Titian," *Carolus* exh. cat. (Madrid: Sociedad Estatal para la Conmemoración de los Centenarios de Felipe II y Carlos V, 2000): 70, n. 19; Bartolomeo Arrighi, *Mantova e suo provincial* (Milan: Edizione Milano, 1974) (originally published in 1859), 337; Roy Strong, *Art and Power: Renaissance Festivals, 1450-1650* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984): 80; Jean Jacquot, ed., *Les fêtes de la Renaissance II: Fêtes et cérémonies au temps de Charles-Quint* (Paris: Editions du Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1960): 426-7.

<sup>61</sup> Guido Rebecchini, "Sculitore e scultori nella Mantova di Giulio Romano, 1: Bernardino Germani e il sepolcro di Pietro Strozzi (con il cognome di Giovanni Battista Scultori)," *Prospettiva*, 108 (2004): 73.

<sup>62</sup> Rebecchini, "Sculitore," 73.

<sup>63</sup> Parshall, *Print*, 389, n. 141.

very loosely, on compositions by Giulio Romano. Historically, scholars have tended to divide Scultori's prints into two categories: reproductive (i.e. after Giulio) and creative (or invented). Upon closer examination, one finds that the categories of his prints are significantly more nuanced than this; many appear to take inspiration from Giulio, but in most cases the compositions have been altered, in some instances, such as with *David and Goliath*, drastically, customized in accordance with Scultori's own purposes.<sup>64</sup>

Giovanni Battista has yet to be the focus of a substantial scholarly study and his artistic work, letters and life are instead dealt with in a piecemeal fashion. In the nineteenth century, Carlo d'Arco wrote a brief biography of Giovanni Battista in his larger study on Mantuan printmakers and listed the known surviving prints.<sup>65</sup> Unlike many of his modern successors, d'Arco was concerned with at least considering the extent of Giovanni Battista's inventiveness, but was hesitant to make a final pronouncement on the printmaker's creative contributions to the prints after Giulio Romano. Gioconda Albricci assembled the first recent catalogue of Giovanni Battista's prints, although she writes more about the courtly atmosphere of Mantua than details of the artist's life.<sup>66</sup> She is, at least, willing to say that his printmaking was an "expression of learned and complex ideas," but largely fails to give an account of these ideas.<sup>67</sup> Intriguingly, she suggests that he may have made many more prints that have not survived.<sup>68</sup> In a separate article, Albricci presents the surviving letters of Giovanni Battista, sent to Cardinal Antoine Perrenot de Granvelle that accompany drawings made

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<sup>64</sup> See for example, the scholarship of Stefania Massari, who has looked at the many printmakers who made prints "after Giulio Romano." *Giulio Romano: pinxit et delineavit* (Rome: Fratelli Palombi, 1993).

<sup>65</sup> d'Arco, *Cinque*, 12-27; 65-71.

<sup>66</sup> Albricci, "Incisioni," 10-63.

<sup>67</sup> Albricci, "Incisioni," 15.

<sup>68</sup> Albricci, "Incisioni," 13; 15.

by the artist.<sup>69</sup> Clifford Brown also discusses these letters while presenting payment records that indicate that Cardinal Ercole Gonzaga paid Giovanni Battista in 1549, 1553 and 1554 for some unidentifiable projects, possibly drawings such as those that were sent to Cardinal Granvelle.<sup>70</sup> Finally, Stefania Massari devoted a brief section to Giovanni Battista in her book on prints after Giulio Romano, but she tends to classify his work as primarily reproductive and is unwilling to credit him for any substantial contribution in the printmaking process.<sup>71</sup> While by no means exhaustive, this brief survey of scholarship is representative of the way in which scholars have examined the work by Giovanni Battista. Further, no-one has, as yet, considered the organization of Giovanni Battista's printmaking enterprise. This dissertation will explore his enterprise and seek to redress the general underestimation of Giovanni Battista's creative contributions to the printmaking process by exploring the ways in which he sought to imbue his prints with distinction and originality.

### **Apprentice at Court**

The key to appreciating the way in which Giovanni Battista approached printmaking is to recognize that, for the majority of his career, he worked in the culturally rich courtly environment of Mantua. Court art can be most simply described as “the distinctive objects and media, typical subject matter, and modes of production associated with princely households.”<sup>72</sup> Printmaking, however, is not usually considered to be a “courtly” art. Additionally, while Giovanni Battista worked in this courtly *milieu*, he

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<sup>69</sup> Gioconda Albricci, “Sei lettere di G. Battista Scultori,” *L'arte a stampa*, 2 (1978): 9-12.

<sup>70</sup> Clifford M. Brown, “Il reverendissimo cardinale, mio signore, el quale venendo spesso a vedermi desegnar: Giovanni Battista Scultori and Cardinal Ercole Gonzaga,” *Civiltà mantovana*, 27 (1992): 25-9.

<sup>71</sup> Massari, *Giulio*, 106-111.

<sup>72</sup> Stephen J. Campbell and Michael W. Cole, *Italian Renaissance Art* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 2012): 204.



himself was not consistently a salaried court artist, nor was he forbidden from taking on work from outside the Gonzaga household.

Most of his work was made not for the open market, but commissioned and very often made to the specifications of a supervising designer or commissioner. His printmaking appears to have been the most independent of his artistic endeavors, in that he was not working under anyone's direction. Likely because printmaking does not seem to have been a courtly medium, he made prints outside the courtly infrastructure, unlike his early work in the Palazzo Te, preparing the *stucchi* to the designs of Giulio Romano.<sup>73</sup> His other sculptural work in metalworking, for example, the *pax* featuring the *Deposition of Christ*, at one time in the treasury of Santa Barbara in Mantua, and now at the Diocesan Museum of Mantua, was commissioned by Ippolito Capilupi, Bishop of Fano in 1562 and very likely made according to the desires of the Bishop.<sup>74</sup> [Fig. 8] A letter dated 12 September, 1573 from an agent of the Duke, Teodoro San Giorgio to Duke Guglielmo Gonzaga suggests that Giovanni Battista be brought to Mantua from Verona in order to enamel two figures in iron for a silver tabernacle commissioned by the Duke.<sup>75</sup> These

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<sup>73</sup> On further sculptural projects on which Giovanni Battista appears to have worked, see Guido Rebecchini's examination of the sculptor's potential involvement in the sculpting of the tomb of Pietro Strozzi in the church of Sant'Andrea. "Scultore," 65-79.

<sup>74</sup> *Tesori d'arte nella terra dei Gonzaga*, exh. cat. (Milan: Electa, 1974): 61. See also Giovanni Battista Intra, *Di Ippolito Capilupi e del suo tempo* (Milan: Società Storica Lombarda, 1893): 118-9; V. Matteucci, *Le chiese artistiche del mantovano* (Mantua: Tip. Eredi Segna, 1902): 163-4; C. Perina, *La basilica di S. Andrea in Mantova* (Mantua: Sartori, 1965): 727.

<sup>75</sup> This document has not previously been connected to Giovanni Battista, but almost certainly has to relate to him, given a letter from him to Duke Guglielmo Gonzaga dated 9 September, 1573, just a few days earlier (ASMn. Archivio Gonzaga, Busta 1507, Number 233). This new letter reads in full: "Giovanni Battista Scultore, il quale lavora a Verona che venesse in qua per smaltare fero due figure che v. e. ha comandate per il tabernacolo d'argento. Cossi egli e venuto et le ho parlato insieme con il prefetti delle fabbriche che s'e disposti di lasciar il lavoro in Verona per servire in V. E. ma non si note obligar a darle finite a St Barbara dicendo che mai ha voluto lasciarsi prefigure tempo alcuno, a finire le sue opere. Et a dimanda quaranta scudi de l'una d'esse figure, si che verrabuono ducento finti tutte cinque. Del pretio credo che si fana callare, ma intorno al tempo e ostinatissimo ne vuol premetter altro, salvo che non lavorera atorno ad altro. Il tempo, e, breve, vostro tu remandi quello che e servita che si favia. Da Mantova il xii di Settembre. D.V. Ecc. Ill. Humil. Et fid. Theodoro San Giorgio. ASMn. Archivio Gonzaga, Busta 2589, 610.

sculptural projects were all done to someone else's specifications. The printmaking, however, appears to have been Giovanni Battista's more personal creative outlet.

This conclusion can be supported in a number of ways: while documents, such as letters and payment records, attest to the work that Giovanni Battista did for the Gonzaga and its court, there are no such documents recording payment specifically for any engraving.<sup>76</sup> Secondly, he only engraved for a brief period of his life: most of his prints were produced between 1537 and 1540. The brevity of his printmaking period could reflect a momentary lull in his career and an attempt on his part to attract new business that might extend beyond the structure of the Mantuan court. Finally, none of his prints bear the name of a contemporary publisher, commissioner or designer. Without exception, all of his prints bear his name alone. If someone was assisting him in making his engravings, they were not credited for it.

As with his *David and Goliath*, the results of his experimentation, the prints themselves, are highly successful, both technically, and also, in terms of the impressive and sophisticated designs. It seems apparent that the creative freedom he found in engraving facilitated the making of his best work. While his printmaking appears to have been made outside the structure of the court (i.e., with no named commissioner or artistic supervisor), he nonetheless benefitted significantly from the culturally rich environment of the Gonzaga household. He drew inspiration from the designs and visual language of Giulio Romano and Mantegna, and perhaps more importantly, he demonstrated an appreciation for a multi-faceted interpretation of a subject and its iconography, arguably a quality that both these artists espoused and promoted. His work for the Gonzaga court

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<sup>76</sup> Not only have I spent time looking in the Archivio di Stato di Mantova, but also in the surviving documents related to Cardinal Ercole Gonzaga in the Diocesan Archives in Mantua, and have thus far discovered nothing beyond that discussed in this dissertation.

and life in Mantua also invariably taught him valuable lessons in negotiating a courtly environment and learning to engage his audience in a consideration of themes that might characterize such a *milieu*.

Beyond his own artistic production, Giovanni Battista himself likely participated in the cultural exchange that typifies an intellectual courtly environment. In 1563, Hubert Goltz published a treatise on Roman Imperial coins and medals, in which he listed collectors of such material in Mantua, following a visit there in the late 1550s, including a “Giovanni Battista Scultori.”<sup>77</sup> While purely speculative, the collecting of coins, medals, and the casts and reproductions of both traded hands in much the same way that Giovanni Battista may have imagined his prints to be exchanged among men of letters.

Armed with his artistic, connoisseurial and social training in Mantua, Giovanni Battista turned to engraving in order to promote his own artistic skill as a designer, that is, his *ingegno*. In the eyes of Giovanni Battista and his artistic contemporaries, *ingegno* could not be learned, but rather, was “a quality that could only be developed and exploited.”<sup>78</sup> Giovanni Battista’s skills lay not only in his inspired “reproductions” of Giulio Romano, but also in the prints that appear to be after his own designs. The ways in which he presented the subjects of his prints allowed for multi-faceted interpretations, reflecting Giovanni Battista’s most important lesson taken from the courtly environment. A work of art that encourages different readings, be they literal, historical, or metaphorical, inspires contemplation and discussion, the latter of which flourished within the Gonzaga court. In the creation of his prints, Giovanni Battista demonstrated his

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<sup>77</sup> Hubert Goltz, *Caius Julius Caesar sive Historiae Imperatorum Caesarumque Romanorum ex antiquis numisatibus restitutiae*, (Bruges, 1563) in Guido Rebecchini, *Private Collectors in Mantua: 1550-1630* (Rome: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 2002): 263-4.

<sup>78</sup> Luke Syson and Dora Thornton, *Objects of Virtue: Art in Renaissance Italy* (Los Angeles: Getty Museum, 2001): 135.

careful calculation of an educated audience, perhaps hoping that these works would trade hands from one court to another, ensuring his fame and future employment.

Unfortunately, it is difficult to measure Giovanni Battista's success in this venture: there is, as yet, no documentation confirming the way in which his prints were acquired or disseminated, either commercially or as gifts.<sup>79</sup>

The handful of correspondence from Giovanni Battista that survives reveals only a tantalizing glimpse of his printmaking enterprise. Six letters from Giovanni Battista to Cardinal Ercole Gonzaga's associate, Cardinal Granvelle, an agent of the Hapsburg court, suggest that Giovanni Battista was willing to take on work outside of Mantua, at least after the death of Giulio Romano.<sup>80</sup> These six letters stretch from 1547 until 1549, the period directly following Giulio's death in 1546, and discuss, for the most part, the preparation of drawings by Giovanni Battista after various Mantuan works of art, many of them originally designed by Giulio.<sup>81</sup> Giovanni Battista agreed, on the arrangement of Cardinal Ercole, to provide Granvelle with a series of drawings, most of which appear to have been drawn by him.<sup>82</sup> While Giovanni Battista's drawings are the focus of the letters, occasional references to his printmaking appear, despite the fact that the majority of his surviving prints seem to have already been made by this point in his life. In a letter dated 31 December, 1547, Giovanni Battista requests an ink recipe from Granvelle,

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<sup>79</sup> While Rebecchini identifies prints within the private collections in Mantua, the subjects of these prints are rarely listed in the notarial documents. One exception to this would be the case of Silvio Calandra, who in 1590 is noted as having a print after Michelangelo's *Last Judgment*, possibly that engraved by Giorgio Ghisi. Rebecchini, *Private*, 168.

<sup>80</sup> Luigi Ferrerino, ed., *Lettere di artisti italiani ad Antonio Perrenot di Granville* (Madrid: Istituto Italiano di cultura, 1977): 45-54 and Brown, "Reverendissimo," 25-29.

<sup>81</sup> It appears likely that it was for these projects that Ercole paid Giovanni Battista, according to the abovementioned payment records in 1549, 1553 and 1554. Brown, "Reverendissimo," 27-8.

<sup>82</sup> These drawings do not appear to have survived.

which was used in Germany in the printing of copper plate engravings.<sup>83</sup> In a subsequent letter, dated 15 September, 1548, Giovanni Battista thanks Granvelle for the ink recipe, which he links with Dürer specifically, but which, unfortunately, had proven difficult, since it had to be used on a heated plate.<sup>84</sup>

A further insight about the way in which Giovanni Battista actually produced his prints comes from a letter from 1550, found in the Archivio di Stato in Mantua, which has not previously been connected with Giovanni Battista. This document, which is attached as Appendix 1, is a letter from a Gonzaga agent, Giovanni Maria Luzzara, to Cardinal Ercole in Rome, dated 31 January, 1550. It mentions in passing that there had been a significant fire in a *casa degli stampatori*, and that most, if not all had been lost.<sup>85</sup> The brief account notes that the fire may have been started on purpose, which could suggest that a printmaking enterprise in Mantua may have faced some competition or rivalry.<sup>86</sup> While it is impossible to confirm that this disaster occurred to Giovanni Battista and his family, it is important to note that Mantua had such a place, and likely, a printing press itself on which Giovanni Battista's engravings could be made. If the fire did occur

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<sup>83</sup> In closing, Giovanni Battista mentions that he encloses a print cut by his son, Adamo. Ferrarino, *Lettere*, 47-48.

<sup>84</sup> Ferrarino, *Lettere*, p. 49

<sup>85</sup> "Questa notte passata si e attacento il fuoco nella casa degli stampatore et e stato tanto grande ch'oltri l'haver abbruggiato tutto. il detto ha poi rovinato il povertuo, et di carti, et di stampe et di tutto guei(?) suoi instrumenti di modo ch'ei dice d'esser ch'peggio di stagno solo che se gli e desolato, ch' piu di seicento ducati et non si sa bene come sia stata la cosa egli dubita che non sia stato fatto a posta, et per chiarezza di cio, si e posta ch'gia inpregione uno di que suoi compositoni sopra il quale ha un poca d'ombra, per certi indici i qual' sono p[er]ioso lievi." "This past night there was a fire in the house of printers and it was so great that they have lost everything. It is said that they are near ruin, and they have lost the cards, the prints and all of their instruments...worth more than 600 ducats...It is not without doubt that it was arson. In order to find out some truth, they have already jailed one of his composers, who had attracted some suspicion because of certain evidence..." Archivio de Stato, Mantua, Archivio Gonzaga, XI.2,

<sup>86</sup> For further information on the type of printing that was being done in and around Mantua in the Renaissance, see Andrea Canova, "Tipografi, librai e cartolai tra Mantova e L'Emilia nel quattrocento," *Rhegi Lingobardiae* (2004): 139-67; See also his work on Mantegna and Gian Marco Cavalli, including "Gian Marco Cavalli incisore per Andrea Mantegna e alter notizie sull'oreficeria e la tipografia a Mantova nel XV secolo," *Italia medeovale e umanistica*, 42 (2001): 149-79.

in the workshop of Giovanni Battista, this may well explain why so few prints identifiable with him survive, dovetailing with Albricci's intriguing suggestion that he created far more engravings than now survive.<sup>87</sup> This might also explain why Vasari's list of prints by Giovanni Battista contains so many prints no longer identifiable, or prints that were actually made by his successors.<sup>88</sup> As the fire was so destructive, perhaps many of his works were lost and he himself chose not to re-cut them, but instead allowed his successors to re-make some of them, including Ghisi's *Fall of Troy* and *Sinon deceiving the Greeks*, discussed in the third chapter.

While no trace of Giovanni Battista's will has yet been discovered, it is still possible to speculate that Giovanni Battista owned many of his own plates, and thus, most importantly, controlled the production and dissemination of his prints. This is highly unusual among sixteenth-century engravers, given that the publishers or commissioners of prints typically claimed ownership of a plate, yet Giovanni Battista, and his three protégés, each seem to have retained a disproportionate number of their own plates (for example, his daughter, Diana, appears to have self-published 54 of her 63 engravings). Customarily, a print publisher such as Antonio Lafreri, the most successful in Rome, would commission a copper plate from an artist: the publisher would pay for labor and materials, and, in effect, purchase the plate from the artist.<sup>89</sup> Less frequently, another artist, most likely a painter, would commission engravings after his own work, and usually retain ownership of the plate.<sup>90</sup> Neither appears to have been the case with most

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<sup>87</sup> Albricci, "Incisioni," 13, 15.

<sup>88</sup> See Introduction, n. 9.

<sup>89</sup> Christopher Witcombe, "Cherubino Alberti and the Ownership of Engraved Plates," *Print Quarterly*, VI (1989): 160-61.

<sup>90</sup> Bury, *Print*, 214; Naoko Takahatake, "Domenico Tibaldi 'Impressore,' Publishing Agostino Carracci's Prints in Bologna," *Burlington Magazine*, 151 (2009): 148-52; Jamie Gabbarelli, "Agostino Carracci's 'St

of Giovanni Battista's prints. None of the first states of his prints bear a publisher's mark, suggesting that he was, in effect, self-publishing. However, since copper plates tended to outlive individuals, it was not uncommon for plates to be passed on to the next generation, either as a commercial transaction or inheritance (as can be seen in the 3 December, 1585 will of Claudio Duchetti, the nephew of Lafreri, to Giacomo di Gerardi).<sup>91</sup> A plate that has been owned and printed repeatedly by a number of different individuals typically reflects the hands through which it has passed, provided that a publisher has not erased his predecessor's mark (as likely happened with Giovanni Battista's signature on *David and Goliath*).

While most of Giovanni Battista's plates may have been destroyed, perhaps in the 1550 fire, rather than later re-issued, at least three of his arguably most important copper plates (*The Po River*, *David and Goliath*, and the *Naval Battle*) survive in the Calcografia Nazionale in Rome (Inv. Nos. 473, 618, 644).<sup>92</sup> The most logical way in which these plates traveled from Mantua to Rome is via Giovanni Battista's likely heirs, his son, Adamo, and daughter, Diana. Outliving Adamo, Diana's heirs appear to have sold at least one, and possibly all three of these plates to the Roman print publisher and seller, Jacopo de Rossi, who acquired fourteen of Diana's own plates either directly from her heirs or from an intermediate publisher, Carlo Losi.<sup>93</sup> De Rossi re-issued the *Naval Battle* in

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Francis Consoled by a Musical Angel,' after Francesco Vanni," *Yale University Art Gallery Bulletin* (2011): 69-73.

<sup>91</sup> F. Ehrle, *La pianta di Roma* (Rome: Danesi, 1908): 47-48. See also Pagani, "Dispersal 1," 3-23; Valeria Pagani, "The Dispersal of Lafreri's Inheritance: 1581-9: Pietro de Nobili," *Print Quarterly*, 25 (2008): 363-93; Valeria Pagani, "The Dispersal of Lafreri's Inheritance: 1581-9: the De' Nobili-Arbotti-Clodio Partnership," *Print Quarterly*, 28 (2011): 119-36.

<sup>92</sup> Stefania Massari, *Incisori Mantovani Del '500 : Giovan Battista, Adamo, Diana Scultori E Giorgio Ghisi Dalle Collezioni Del Gabinetto Nazionale Delle Stampe E Della Calcografia Nazionale* (Rome: De Luca, 1981): 21-23.

<sup>93</sup> This is based on research from my Master's Dissertation on Diana Scultori, The Warburg Institute, 2002. This can be concluded by tracing the publisher's marks on the various states of the prints. On the de Rossi,

1648, with the three plates finally joining the collection of the Calcografia Nazionale in the late seventeenth century. Given the personal importance of both *David and Goliath* and the *Naval Battle* prints, it would have been extremely important to Giovanni Battista that he and his daughter retained ownership of these and many of his other prints. The reference to the fire in the *casa degli stampatori*, coupled with Giovanni Battista's ink recipe request in the letter to Cardinal Granvelle, as well as his retention of his engraved plates, suggest, significantly, that he was overseeing the printing process himself, retaining control of the production from start to finish.

### **The New Argonauts**

Foremost among Giovanni Battista's subjects are depictions of various battles and conflicts, some known, as in *David and Goliath*, and others more difficult to identify. In the making of his *Naval Battle*, Mantua had no shortage of battle imagery from which Giovanni Battista could draw inspiration, in the form not only of frescoes, such as the *Fall of the Giants* in the Palazzo Ducale, but also in ancient sculpture belonging to the Gonzaga, as well as in tapestries and other decorative arts, and finally, from the prints made by Giovanni Battista's predecessors, such as Mantegna.

His impressive *Naval Battle*, which measures 15.8 x 22.6 inches, seems at first glance to depict an antique naval battle. [Fig. 9] It, like all of Giovanni Battista's prints, does not bear the name of an inventor, only his signature at the bottom center: "I. B. Mantuanus / Sculptor 1538." The print does not appear to be related to any one drawing by Giulio Romano, but one can still see the elements that Giovanni Battista has borrowed

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see Francesca Consagra, "The de Rossi Family Print Publishing Shop: A Study in the History of the Print Industry in Seventeenth-Century Rome." PhD Dissertation (The Johns Hopkins University, 1992); Anna Grelle Iusco, ed. *Indice delle stampe intagliate in rame a bulino, e in acqua forte esistenti nella stamparia di Lorenzo Filippo de' Rossi Apresso Santa Maria della Pace in Roma, 1735* (Rome: Artmidè: 1996); Suzanne Boorsch, "Vincenzo Cenci, Erased Publisher," *Notes in the History of Art*, 31/32 (2012): 51-57.



from him, especially in the armor design and open-mouthed gasping expression on some of the faces.<sup>94</sup> It also seems to relate to a fragmentary Greek relief of the second century A.D., now at the Museo Archeologico, in Venice.<sup>95</sup> [Fig. 10]

The scene has historically been loosely identified as an episode from the Trojan War, but the subject is not immediately obvious.<sup>96</sup> This ambiguity was, it would seem, very intentional. The print was created to be a showcase of the printmaker's ability both to invent and to engrave, the success of which can be measured by the fact that in 1584, Gian Paolo Lomazzo proposes it in his treatise on painting as a model for those wanting to create a naval battle, calling the composition an "intelligent wonder".<sup>97</sup> Lomazzo's inclusion of the print as an *exemplum* in his artistic treatise likely signals that at least one intended and actual audience was other artists. The intentional ambiguity in the subject of the scene would allow for artists to adopt certain aspects of it for a wide variety of subjects, either historical or contemporary, making it a canonical resource, much in the same way that many of Mantegna's prints can be taken.<sup>98</sup> However, Giovanni Battista's

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<sup>94</sup> Albricci, "Incisioni," 48.

<sup>95</sup> *Battle at the Ships*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Century A.D., Inv. No. 154, Museo Archeologico, Venice, cited in Phyllis Pray Bober and Ruth Rubinstein, *Renaissance Artists and Antique Sculpture* (London and Oxford: Harvey Miller Publishers and Oxford University Press, 1986): 182-3.

<sup>96</sup> Wendy Thompson, "Poets, Lovers, and Heroes in Italian Mythological Prints," *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, 61 (2004): 52.

<sup>97</sup> "In soma altri ed altri ordini e modi si hanno da tenere in comporre queste guerre navali, come benissimo ha saputo esprimere in disegno un certo Giovanni Battista mantovano in una certa carta, di cui principalmente fra le alter si vede una furia ed intelligenza mirabile di tali composizioni." Gio. Paolo Lomazzo, *Trattato dell'Arte della Pittura, Scultura ed Architettura* (Milan: 1584) (republished in Rome, 1844): Book VI, Chapter XXX, 211.

<sup>98</sup> Mantegna's prints that appear especially to work in this way include his *Battle of the Sea Monsters* and his scenes of Bacchic revelers. Mantegna appears to have created models of antiquity in his work, on which see Stephen Campbell, *The Cabinet of Eros: Renaissance Mythological Painting and the Studiolo of Isabella D'este* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004): 159-60. On Mantegna's prints as models, see Sira Waldner, *Andrea Mantegna e La Creazione Iconografica: Madonna Della Tenerezza Con Il Bambino Sognante* (Ascona: MHF Memorial Foundation, 2009); Francis Ames-Lewis, "A Northern Source for Mantegna's Adoration of the Shepherds," *Print Quarterly* 9 (1992): 268-71; Suzanne Boorsch and David Landau, "Mantegna and Prints," *Burlington Magazine*, 135 (1993): 826-8; Canova, "Gian Marco Cavalli," 149-179; Keith Christianson, "The Case for Mantegna as Printmaker," *Burlington Magazine* 135 (1993): 604-612; David Ekserdjian, "Parmigianino and Mantegna's 'Triumph of Caesar,'" *Burlington Magazine*

print cannot be taken *exclusively* as a sort of generic depiction of a naval battle. Within it, to the educated eye, are details that allow for some of the figures to be identified and connected with a mythological subject separate from the Trojan war, and perhaps even sixteenth-century individuals in the guise of mythological figures.

At the center of the ambiguous subject exists a tension: the print is both a generic depiction of a naval engagement as well as an imagining of a specific literary, and even possibly, historical event, involving a well-known and identifiable cast of characters. Giovanni Battista's print acts as a conflation of two different approaches to early Renaissance print-making: the generic subject and its potential use as a model for artists echoes the prints made by Mantegna and his followers, while the specific details that might allow for a more precise reading follows the prints made after Raphael by Marcantonio and others.<sup>99</sup>

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134 (1992): 100-101; Patricia Emison, "The Racousness of Mantegna's Mythological Engravings." *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 124 (1994): 159-176; Shelley Fletcher, "A re-evaluation of two Mantegna Prints." *Print Quarterly* 14 (1997): 67-77; Shelley Fletcher, "A Closer Look at Mantegna's Prints." *Print Quarterly* 18 (2001): 3-41; Michael A. Jacobsen, "The Engravings of Mantegna." Ph.D. dissertation (Columbia University, 1976); David Landau, "Mantegna." *Print Quarterly* 23 (2006): 449-50; Evelyn Lincoln, "Mantegna." *The Invention of the Italian Renaissance Printmaker*, New Haven (2000): 17-43; Kristen Lippincott, "Mantegna's Tarrochi." *Print Quarterly* 3 (1986): 357-60; Andrew Martindale, *The Triumphs of the Caesar' by Andrea Mantegna in the Collection of Her Majesty the Queen at Hampton Court* (London: H. Miller, 1979); Jane Martineau ed. *Andrea Mantegna*. Exh. cat. (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 1992); Jean Michel Massing, "Jacobus Argenteratensis: Etude Preliminaire." *Arte Veneta*, 31 (1977): 42-52; Jean Michel Massing, "The Triumph of the Caesar' by Benedetto Bordon and Jacobus Argetoratensis: Its Iconography and Influence." *Print Quarterly* 7 (1990): 2-21; Alison Wright, "Mantegna and Pollaiuolo: artistis personality and the marketing of invention." *Drawing 1400-1600: Invention and Innovation*, ed. Stuart Currie (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998): 72-90; Edith Wyss, "Matthaus Greuter's Engravings for Petrarch's Triumphs." *Print Quarterly* 17 (2000), 347-63.

<sup>99</sup> On the relationship between Raphael and Marcantonio Raimondi, see especially Lisa Pon, *Raphael, Dürer, and Marcantonio Raimondi: Copying and the Italian Renaissance Print* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004); See also: Pezzini Grazia Bernini, et al. *Raphael Invenit: Stampe da Raffaeolo nelle collezioni dell'istituto nazionale per la grafica*. Exh. Cat. (Rome: Fratelli Edizioni Quasar, 1985); Michael Bury, "Raphael and Marcantonio," *Print Quarterly*, 23 (2006): 202; Clay Dean, et al. *Changing Impressions: Marcantonio Raimondi and Sixteenth-Century Print Connoisseurship*. Exh. cat. (New Haven: Yale University Art Gallery, 1999); David Ekserdjian, "Bernardino Ricca and a Date for Marcantonio Raimondi's Deposition." *Print Quarterly*, 6 (1989): 43-4; Patricia Emison, "Marcantonio's Massacre of the Innocents." *Print Quarterly*, I (1984): 257-67; Marzia Faietti, "A New Preparatory drawing by Marcantonio Raimondi." *Print Quarterly*, 6 (1989): 308-10; Philipp Fehl and Stephen Prokopoff. *Raphael and the Ruins of Rome: The Poetic Dimension*. Exh. cat. (Champaign-Urbana: Kranner Art Museum,

Based on its assumed Trojan content, it has been suggested that the print may relate also to two other prints, made by Giorgio Ghisi, which appear in turn to have been made after prints, no longer surviving, by Giovanni Battista, *Sinon deceiving the Trojans* and *The Fall of Troy*.<sup>100</sup> Certainly, the Trojan War was a popular subject in Mantua, and indeed, Italy, circa 1538, as Giulio Romano was working on the designs for the Sala di Troia in the Palazzo Ducale for Federico Gonzaga.<sup>101</sup> Perino del Vaga designed a series of tapestries for Andrea Doria based on the life of Aeneas, including a scene of *Neptune Calming the Tempest*, which was engraved by Giulio Bonasone in circa 1535-45.<sup>102</sup> [Fig. 11] While not a battle specifically, Bonasone's scene bears a compositional likeness to Giovanni Battista's *Naval Battle* with its inclusion of a nude Neptune and a group of nude survivors clustered on a rock. As Bonasone's print is undated, it is impossible to confirm whether Bonasone's print pre- or post-dates that by Giovanni Battista, but it does

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1984); James Grantham Turner, "Marcantonio's Lost Modi and their copies." *Print Quarterly*, 21 (2004): 363-84; Arthur M. Hind, "Marcantonio Raimondi (1480[?]-1530[?])." *Print Collector's Quarterly* 3 (1913): 243-276; Arthur M. Hind, *Marcantonio Raimondi and Italian Engravers and the Etchers of the Sixteenth Century*. (New York: Fredk. A. Stokes company, 1912); Lynne Lawner, *I Modi: Nell'opera Di Giulio Romano, Marcantonio Raimondi, Pietro Aretino e Jean-Frédéric-Maximilien De Waldeck* (Milan: Longanesi, 1984); Lynne Lawner, *I modi: The Sixteen Pleasures, an Erotic Album of the Italian Renaissance*. (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1988); Giorgio Lise, *L'incisione erotica del Rinascimento* (Milan: Carlo Emilio Bestetti Editore, 1975); Sylvia Ferino Pagden, "Invenzioni Raffaellesche adombrate nel libretto di Venezia: La 'Strage degli Innocenti' e la 'Lapidazione di Santo Stefano' a Genova." *Studi su Raffaello*, ed. M. S. Hamoud and M. L. Strochi (Urbino: Quattroventi, 1987); Lisa Pon, "Marcantonio and Raphael." *Print Quarterly*, 16 (1999): 368-70; David Rosand, "Raphael, Marcantonio and the Icon of Pathos." *Source: Notes in the History of Art* 3 (1984): 34-52; Innis H. Shoemaker and Elizabeth Broun, *The Engravings of Marcantonio Raimondi*. Exh. Cat. (Lawrence: University of Kansas, 1981); John Spike, "Review of Bologna e l'umanesimo." *Print Quarterly*, 7 (1990): 315; Bette Talvacchia, *Taking Positions: On the Erotic in Renaissance Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999); Silvia Urbini, "Marcantonio as Book Illustrator." *Print Quarterly* 16 (1999): 50-56; Madeleine Viljoen, "Raphael and the Restorative Power of Prints." *Print Quarterly* 18 (2001): 379-395; Madeleine Viljoen, "Prints and False Antiquities in the Age of Raphael." *Print Quarterly*, 21 (2004): 235-47; Anthony de Witt, *Marcantonio Raimondi* (Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1968); Wood, "Cannibalized," 210-20.

<sup>100</sup> Thompson, "Poets," 52.

<sup>101</sup> Bette Talvacchia, "Homer, Greek Heroes and Hellenism in Giulio Romano's Hall of Troy," *The Journal of Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 51 (1988): 235-242; Jeremie Koering, "La Sala di Troia de Jules Romain: l'histoire et ses complications." *Studiolo*, 3 (2006): 191-21.

<sup>102</sup> Bernice Davidson, "The *Navigazione d'Enea* Tapestries Designed by Perino del Vaga for Andrea Doria," *The Art Bulletin*, 72, (1990): 35-50.

demonstrate that naval images were *en vogue*.<sup>103</sup> However, the *Naval Battle* contains no direct reference to the Trojan War.

Instead, it is possible that Giovanni Battista is drawing inspiration from another ancient mythological epic poem, that involving Jason and the Argonauts, taken from the ancient *Argonautica*. Itself an inspiration for the *Aeneid*, the *Argonautica* alludes to the Trojan War, which was to take place two generations after the Argonaut expedition. Originally composed by Apollonius Rhodius, a Hellenistic poet, it was imitated and in parts, translated, by Valerius Flaccus in circa 70 AD.<sup>104</sup> The verses survived in various versions and re-workings in the Renaissance through a manuscript recovered by Poggio Bracciolini in the monastery of St Gallen, Switzerland in 1416, from where it was copied, with its *edito princeps* published in 1474 in Bologna.<sup>105</sup> This was followed shortly thereafter by an edition published by the Aldine press in 1521, which was edited by Franciscus Asulanus, who credits “Hercules Mantuanus” as his collaborator.<sup>106</sup> It is possible that Giovanni Battista was familiar with this text through the Aldine edition, or some other, as yet identified source in Mantua.

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<sup>103</sup> Giovanni Battista’s print was not the only contemporary print to depict a naval battle: Bernardo Daddi’s *Naval Battle* is also thought to be after a design by Giulio Romano, and while considerably less impressive, it shares some common figures, including the decorated boats, the nudes and the armed soldiers. (Inv. No. 1963.30.2859, Achenbach Foundation for Graphic Arts, San Francisco) Daddi’s print appears to be a depiction of the Battle of Actium, suggested by the nude female figure, who can most probably be identified as Cleopatra. A “queen of the East,” Cleopatra’s battle against the Roman west, could carry significance to a sixteenth-century audience who “battles” the Turks. Another similar print is the *Naval Battle in the Tiber at Ostia*, which is thought to be after Polidoro da Caravaggio, a contemporary of Giulio Romano in Raphael’s Roman workshop. (Inv. No. 1963.30.37179, Achenbach Foundation for Graphic Arts, San Francisco) This print also shares a number of common features with Giovanni Battista’s *Naval Battle* including the nudes climbing over the side of a boat and the river god in the lower left hand side. While it is difficult to establish a relative chronology for these prints, given that they are both undated, it is still of great interest that these should share iconography, and that each depict an ancient battle between the Romans and a foreign entity that retains its resonance in sixteenth-century Europe.

<sup>104</sup> W. R. Barnes, “The Trojan War in Valerius Flaccus’ *Argonautica*,” *Hermes*, 109 (1981), 360-370.

<sup>105</sup> Andrew Zissos, “Reception of Valerius Flaccus’ ‘*Argonautica*,’” *International Journal of the Classical Tradition*, 13 (2006): 173-4.

<sup>106</sup> C. Valerii Flacci *Argonautica*. J. B. Pii carmen ex quarto Argonauticon Apollonii. Orphei *Argonautica* innominato interprete.

Central to an interpretation of the scene as a derivative depiction of an episode from the *Argonautica* is the inclusion of a number of visual references to the golden fleece, the ultimate object of quest for the Argonauts. The print also references the first elected “leader” of the Argonauts, Hercules, who in turn insisted upon Jason as the leader. In Book 2, Hercules and the Argonauts leave the island of Doliones to press on to the Mysian mainland, whereupon they encounter a storm so fierce, that Hercules, who is singlehandedly working to row the ship, breaks his oar. While Giovanni Battista’s print does not picture this exactly, the subject instead seems to be an imagined pastiche of the Argonaut’s adventures. About the broken oar, Valerius Flaccus says:

Thereupon a spirit of contention stirred each chieftain, who should be the last to leave his oar. For all around the windless air smoothed the swirling waves and lulled the sea to rest. And they, trusting in the calm, mightily drove the ship forward; and as she sped through the salt sea, not even the storm-footed steeds of Poseidon would have overtaken her. Nevertheless when the sea was stirred by violent blasts, which were just rising from the rivers about evening, forspent with toil, they ceased. But Heracles by the might of his arms pulled the weary rowers along all together, and made the strong-knit timbers of the ship to quiver. But when, eager to reach the Mysian mainland, they passed along in sight of the mouth of Rhyndaeus and the great cairn of Aegaeon, a little way from Phrygia, then Heracles, as he ploughed up the furrows of the roughened surge, broke his oar in the middle. And one half he held in both his hands as he fell sideways, the other the sea swept away with its receding wave. And he sat up in silence glaring round; for his hands were unaccustomed to be idle.<sup>107</sup>

Most likely in reference to these lines and this Herculean effort, Giovanni Battista included a broken oar on the hull of a central boat in the *Naval Battle*, behind the small boat being propelled by two oarsmen. [Fig. 9c] The horses of Poseiden are also pictured in the print, seemingly unable to manage the rough waters, flailing in the left corner of the print.

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<sup>107</sup> *Argonautica*, (ll. 1153-1171); Apollonius. *Apollonius Rhodius, the Argonautica: With an English Translation*, Trans. R. C. Seaton (London: W. Heinemann, 1912).

Further elements in the print reference the tale of Jason, Hercules and the Argonauts. At the lower right corner of the *Naval Battle*, a highly decorated ship carries two generals, who watch the action, instead of engaging in the battle. [Fig. 9a] Their boat bears not only the head of a ram, through which is intertwined a nude figure, but also the head of a boar. While the ram may refer to the golden fleece after which Jason and his companions quest, the larger boar's head might be taken as a reference to the Erymanthean boar, captured by Hercules in his fourth task. Finally, underneath the nude satyr torso on the prow of the same boat, the Hydra can be seen, another monster defeated by the hero.

A second ship behind the first is less decorated, bearing only a lion's head on the prow, likely also a reference to Hercules, and while it does not appear to have any passengers, the sides of the boat are decorated with rectangular shields bearing the motif of the winged thunderbolt, which also appear two years later in Giovanni Battista's *David and Goliath*, discussed above. [Fig. 9b] As the winged thunderbolts appear on two different prints by Giovanni Battista, and specifically on pieces of armor, it would seem that the motif should be taken not only possibly as an emblem of the Gonzaga, but perhaps also of Giovanni Battista himself.

A nude warrior leans over the side of this boat in order to haul another naked compatriot onto the ship. Their poses and nudity recall (although do not exactly replicate) Michelangelo's designs for the *Battle of Cascina* from three decades before, possibly available to Giovanni Battista via a print by Marcantonio Raimondi, *The Climber*.<sup>108</sup> [Fig. 12] At least until 1541, when Vasari likely saw them, three cartoon fragments of Michelangelo's *Battle of Cascina* survived in the private collection of the Strozzi family

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<sup>108</sup> Pon, *Raphael*, 80.

in Mantua, and may have been seen by Giovanni Battista before they left the city at an unknown date.<sup>109</sup> A further reference could be to Raphael's tapestries of the *Acts of the Apostles*, specifically the Draft of Fishes, tapestries that existed as copies in Mantua.<sup>110</sup> [Fig. 13] Finally, Giovanni Battista could also be calling attention to the similar figures and boats in the Battle of Ostia in the Stanza del Incendio at the Vatican.<sup>111</sup> [Fig. 14] Their inclusion seems to be a decorative element, a useful model from which other artists might work.

Men dressed in armor, who wear muscular cuirasses offset the nudes in this print. The unfolding action, the fighting and straining allow for Giovanni Battista to demonstrate his engraving prowess in depicting the male body. As with the nudes in the earlier *Battle of the Nudes* by Antonio del Pollaiuolo, also a print likely intended as an artistic model, "the concerns of painter-sculptors like Pollaiuolo, Verrocchio and Francesco di Giorgio addressed the increasing value set upon representations of the heroic male figure in the prime of life...where the active, or potentially active naked body is the vehicle of *virtù*."<sup>112</sup> The simultaneous flexing of all the muscle groups on Giovanni Battista's bodies are a physical impossibility, a criticism leveled upon his predecessors by none other than Leonardo da Vinci.<sup>113</sup>

Fierce combat unfolds in the other ships, where groups of soldiers fight with each other, some with spears, others with swords, still more with battering rams. More soldiers

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<sup>109</sup> Rebecchini, *Private*, 144-5.

<sup>110</sup> Albricci, "Incisioni," 47.

<sup>111</sup> Kurt Badt, "Raphael's Incendio del Borgo," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 22 (1959): 35-59; Konrad Oberhuber, "Die Fresken der Stanza dell'Incendio im Werk Raffaels," *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlung in Wien*, 22 (1962): 23-72.

<sup>112</sup> Alison Wright, *The Pollaiuolo Brothers: The Arts of Florence and Rome* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005): 161.

<sup>113</sup> Wright, 161; Leonardo da Vinci, *The Literary Works of Leonardo da Vinci*, ed. Jean Paul Richter, (London: Phaidon, 1970): 245, nos. 488 and 489.

bearing shields with winged thunderbolts appear to have successfully boarded an enemy ship, their helmets peaking over the edge of their shields, while at the other side of the ship, soldiers bearing oval shields and spears appear to prepare for battle with their foes. One of the ships tucked behind the others bears a series of frieze decorations more appropriate for a ceiling than a boat, with shells, beading and egg and dart designs. The variation of poses in these figures and decorative elements all speak to the print potentially acting as an artistic model.

The technical quality of this print is impressive; the size and detail show Giovanni Battista to have truly mastered his art. This print appears to be an exhibition of his skill and imagination, a piece that advertises his *ingegno*, to be admired by artists and literate collectors. His inclusion of the decorative elements on the ships, especially the sea gods, reveal his familiarity with the printmaking of his most important predecessor, Mantegna, while his nod to Raphael, Giulio Romano and/or Michelangelo with his nude figures cleverly demonstrate his familiarity with the work of his contemporaries. As in his *David and Goliath*, the inclusion of his impressively decorated shields and arms remind his viewers of his ability to design such items. Finally, his boat decorated by friezes advertise his ability to work as a sculptor, specifically referring to his work as a stucco artist, for example, in the Palazzo Te, where he undoubtedly crafted similar friezes.

Next to the boat with the broken oar, a third man holds a hammer and strikes the prow of this ship with a stake, attempting to breach the hull. [Fig. 9c] The action of the third man in the boat, whose place is at the literal center of the print, recalls the process of carving a copper plate in the making of an engraving. Giovanni Battista, the creator of this scene, has placed himself at the very center of this print, recalling the heroic actions



of Hercules and casting himself as a second hero in this tableau. While the *Naval Battle* is in no way a narrative composition picturing a specific event in the *Argonautica*, Giovanni Battista appears to have taken the verses as a departure point from which to construct his invention, including references to the quest of the Argonauts, such as the broken oar and to the symbolism related to Jason and Hercules.

However, the *Naval Battle* might also be interpreted in a third, even more topical, way. Given the inclusion of various references to the Argonauts, it might also be possible to see this print as a celebration of the victory of Charles V in Tunis with his taking the port of Goletta, and his defeat of the Admiral of the Ottoman Emperor, Khayr ad-Din Barbarossa in 1535.<sup>114</sup> This additional contemporary valence allows for the print to commemorate a major victory for Charles V and the Gonzaga, and especially the elevation of Ferrante Gonzaga to the impressive status of Viceroy of Sicily.<sup>115</sup> That the battle could be seen as an imagining of an important recent event such as the taking of Tunis adds to the allure of the print: Giovanni Battista introduced a wide spectrum of traditional elements such as fighting soldiers and mythical creatures to fit any number of subjects, while possibly seizing on the famed victory of Ferrante Gonzaga and Charles V from three years before.

In the few years prior to Charles V's campaign against Tunis, Ludovico Ariosto cast the Emperor as a new Jason, foretelling the emperor's naval campaign:

‘Because of this,’ she [the fairy] continues, ‘no ship goes from Europe into Asia or vice versa, but as the months and years go by, who knows

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<sup>114</sup> On Barbasossa and his campaign for Carthage, see Roger Bigelow Merriman, *Suleiman the Magnificent 1520-1566* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008): 215-218.

<sup>115</sup> Ferrante commanded 8,000 Italian soldiers alone to the battle in Tunis. The campaign is reputed to have cost over a million ducats, and was made possible only because of Francisco de Pizarro's conquest of Peru, which netted over 2 million ducats. Thus, this was no small military campaign. James D. Tracy, *Emperor Charles V: Impresario of War: Campaign Strategy, International Finance, and Domestic Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002): 180.

what *new Argonauts* will appear to defy the curse a god [Neptune] has made and find the way for those vessels to make the crossing and traverse a course across all these continuous seas to the Arabs, Persians, Indians and Chinese. They will encircle Africa and find new islands and new peoples, for the track the sun takes every day is of the kind that men can follow. Never going back, they can arrive where they began. The mind can conceive of this even now, and for the lack of brave explorers there will be remedies, men who will sail to the far antipodes. They will issue forth from the gates that Hercules made at the straits of Gibraltar and proceed just the way the sun does, and by these exertions find new worlds that clearly need improvement, as for instance the pieties of Christianity...I see the conquest of a teeming mass of savages who, converted, join the rolls of the civilized subjects of Aragon whose loyalty to Charles they swear upon the Holy Bible that these two parts of the world be kept apart for six or seven centuries—until there came an emperor with a pious heart, the greatest since Augustus, who could fulfill his plan to reunite the world and start a grand new age when wisdom and justice would rule everywhere for all of mankind's good.'<sup>116</sup>

A complication, however, in taking the *Naval Battle* within the valence of the *Argonautica* and Ariosto's verses, which cast Charles V as a *new Argonaut*, lies in the fact that the Argonauts were primarily plunderers and less crusaders, in addition to which, they never fought a naval battle *per se*. Further, while successful in his quest for the Golden Fleece, Jason's story is not free from negative outcomes, falling from favor with the gods in his betrayal of Medea. The connection to the Argonauts in Giovanni Battista's print then does not extend to the figure of Jason necessarily and references only Ariosto's poetic allusions to Charles V as a new Argonaut, with emphasis placed on his Order of the Golden Fleece. More specifically, Giovanni Battista draws on Ariosto's suggestion that these new Argonauts, like Hercules in the earlier *Argonautica*, had "to defy the curse a god [Neptune] has made" in his inclusion of Neptune's four horsemen in the lower left corner, who appear in distress and in danger of drowning. [Fig. 9d] The

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<sup>116</sup> Lodovico Ariosto. *Orlando Furioso: a New Verse Translation*, Trans. David R Slavitt (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009): Canto 15, Verses 19-23, 306-7.

printmaker has not included the figure of Neptune, his presence signified instead only by the trident next to the horses. Charles V and his new Argonauts appear to have succeeded in defying Neptune's curse by crossing the Mediterranean Sea.

It is possible that Charles V could be seen to be represented by the watching general on the right in the main boat, surveying the battle scene unfolding before him, with his hand resting on the hilt of his sword. [Fig. 9a] Standing next to the Emperor is likely his African ally, Mulay Husan, the deposed king of Tunis, who wears a helmet decorated with a sphinx, which denotes his Eastern origin. The decorative ram on the top of the Emperor's ship is a reference to his Royal Order, that of the Golden Fleece, itself a reference to the quest of the ancient Argonauts, however, the head of the boar dominates the boat.<sup>117</sup> The boat may carry Charles V, but his symbolism is seemingly dominated by the hallmarks of Hercules. While one might associate the prominent fighting nude figure at the front center of the print as Andrea Doria, who was often pictured as a nude Neptune, it seems more likely that the heroic Ferrante Gonzaga is being commemorated by this nude figure, in the guise of Hercules.<sup>118</sup> The pose of this nude is similar to that of Hercules killing the Hydra, pictured on the reverse of a later portrait medal made by Leone Leoni for Ferrante Gonzaga from circa 1555. [Fig. 15] One may well wonder why

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<sup>117</sup> Philip II, the son of Charles V, named his boat the "Argo" in 1565, in his campaign against Suleiman the Magnificent. Marie Tanner, *The Last Descendants of Aeneas: The Hapsburgs and the Mythic Image of the Emperor* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993): 5-6.

<sup>118</sup> Albricci, "Incisioni," 47; A. Levi, "Rilievi di sarcofaghi nel Palazzo Ducale di Mantova," *Dedalo*, 7 (1926/7): 218. For Doria as Neptune, see for example the c. 1528 drawing by Baccio Bandinelli of Andrea Doria as Neptune (BM Inv. No. 1895,0915.553), in preparation for a statue for the square in front of Genoa's cathedral, and the painting of the same subject by Agnolo Bronzino, now in the Pinaoteca di Brera, Milan. (Campbell and Cole, *Italian*, 454.)

Barbarossa himself was not included in Giovanni Battista's print, however, he appears to have retreated in his ship during the first engagement with the Imperial navy.<sup>119</sup>

The campaign to defeat the marauding Barbarossa united forces from across Europe, becoming "an undertaking comparable in scale to any major early crusade."<sup>120</sup> According to a dispatch sent to King Henry VIII on 13 October, 1535, Charles V, together with Andrea Doria and Ferrante Gonzaga entered into naval combat in order to take Tunis:

In 1535, seeing that Barbarossa, called Kayredin Bassa, who had committed many ravages on Christendom, had invaded Barbary with the maritime forces of the Turk, about 300 vessels, of which he was captain general, and there taken La Goulette de Thunes, the city of Tunis, and ports of Bona and Serta, and established his rule in Barbary; the Emperor sent orders to all his seaports to prepare a naval force to attack the infidel.<sup>121</sup>

Giovanni Battista's *Naval Battle* includes a number of details that can be linked with recognizable details from the battle for Goletta in the Campaign for Tunis. Given these identifiable details, it might be more appropriate to entitle the print *Charles V and the New Argonauts*.

In addition to maintaining the ambiguity of the subject in order to be useful to other artists as a source, why not make an imperial connection more obvious within *Charles V and the New Argonauts*? For one, Charles V's official war artist, Jan Cornelisz Vermeyen, seemingly had a monopoly on the prints made after the campaign for

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<sup>119</sup> On Barbarossa's retreat, see Virginia H. Aksan and Daniel Goffman, *The early modern Ottomans: Remapping the Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007). For a printed portrait of Barbarossa, see J. M. Rogers and R. M. Ward, *Suleyman the Magnificent* (London: British Museum Press, 1988): Cat. 5.

<sup>120</sup> Kurt Steinbart, "Jan Cornelisz Vermeyen," *Marburger Jahrbuch für Kunstwissenschaft*, 6 (1931): 86; Hendrick J Horn, *Jan Corneliz Vermeyen, Painter of Charles V, and his Conquest of Tunis*, 2 vols. (Doornspijk, The Netherlands: Davaco, 1989): 112.

<sup>121</sup> *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII*, vol. 9, ed. James Gardiner (London, 1886): 13 Oct., R.O., 602.

Tunis.<sup>122</sup> For another, Mantua had a recent history of changing loyalties: Federico Gonzaga had, before his alliance with Charles V, previously worked as a *condottiere* for the papacy, as attested to in an inscription in the architrave in the Sala di Psiche, which read: “Federigo II Gonzaga, Fifth Marquis of Mantua, Captain General of the Florentine Republic, ordered this place built for honest leisure after work to restore strength in quiet.”<sup>123</sup> Such an inscription could have been a source of embarrassment for Federico when he dined in the Sala di Psiche alone with Charles V, on the occasion of his visit to Mantua in 1530. As has been observed:

In the permanent decorations of a palace, homage was paid to the emperor in a type of code, presumably explained to him in his presence, or to his ambassadors in his absence. Perhaps Federico feared a sudden reversal of Charles’ political fortunes, which would transform an explicit apotheosis of the Emperor into an embarrassing reminder of a past mistake.<sup>124</sup>

The same could be said of Giovanni Battista’s prints: the many ways in which one might read the subject of his prints could shield any political interpretations. A print, no less one with multiple readings, is far easier than a fresco to discount, destroy or re-interpret if its subject and inscriptions (should it have any) offend. However, unlike a fresco, a print can also be passed from one to another and travel great distances. As a result, one must look carefully and closely in order to recognize the way in which Giovanni Battista linked the print with Hercules, the Argonauts and possibly, the Imperial campaign against Tunis.

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<sup>122</sup> Horn, *Vermeyen*, 18.

<sup>123</sup> W. Eisler, “Patronage and Diplomacy: the North Italian Residencies of the Emperor Charles V,” *Patronage, Art and Society in Renaissance Italy*, ed. F.W. Kent, P. Simons and J.C. Eade (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987): 275.

<sup>124</sup> Eisler, “Patronage”, 277.

Charles V, and his wider circle, certainly built his reputation upon and commemorated his victory at Tunis.<sup>125</sup> Indeed, Charles V may even have summoned Vermeyen to Spain in 1534 in order that he might act as a war-artist during the campaign.<sup>126</sup> Regardless of whether he was summoned for this express reason, Vermeyen certainly accompanied Charles V on the campaign, as is attested to by Karl van Mander.<sup>127</sup> Vermeyen held a monopoly on the depiction of the expedition, granted him by the Council of Brabant on 26 May, 1536, and renewed on 19 March, 1538, to “print certain portraits and depictions of the armies of his Royal Majesty and of the siege before Tunis.”<sup>128</sup> This monopoly covered a print engraved by Cornelis Bos, designed by Vermeyen, the *Fall of Tunis*, from circa 1535/6, two years before the making of this print, which includes land combat, but not a naval battle. While it is difficult to measure the efficacy of such a monopoly, Vermeyen’s on images after this campaign may be the foremost reason for the subtle references to the campaign within Giovanni Battista’s print, recognizable after close examination, but in no way identified outright as such.

Some scholars have speculated on the route that Vermeyen may have taken on his return from Tunis to Flanders, most likely through Italy, based on his dependence in his subsequent work on the art of Raphael, among others.<sup>129</sup> While pure speculation, it is possible that Vermeyen himself came through Mantua. Over a decade after the campaign,

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<sup>125</sup> So, too, it would seem, did Andrea Doria, who according to Benjamin Eldredge, commissioned the decoration at the church of San Matteo in Genoa to celebrate his successful assays in North Africa. Eldredge is currently pursuing his research as part of a PhD Dissertation at Rutgers University.

<sup>126</sup> Steinbart, “Vermeyen,” 86 (83-113); Horn, *Vermeyen*, 13.

<sup>127</sup> Horn, *Vermeyen*, 14, 339-41. Carl van Mander, *Het Schilder-Boeck waer in voor eerst de leerlustighe Iueght den grondt der Edel Vry Schilderconst in versheyden deelen wort voorghedraghen*, Haarlem, 1604. Facsimile edition (Utrecht: Davaco Publishers, 1969): 224v.

<sup>128</sup> Horn, *Vermeyen*, 18.

<sup>129</sup> Horn, *Vermeyen*, 22; Eduard von Engerth, “Über die im Kunsthistorischen Museum neu zur Aufstellung gelangenden Gemälde. III. Niederländische Schulen. Jan Vermay. Kaiser Karls V. Kriegszug nach Tunis,” *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen des allerhöchsten Kaiserhauses*, II (1884): 148 and Steinbart, “Vermeyen,” 111-3.

and after working on a set of tapestries for Ferrante Gonzaga, the *Fructus Belli*, Vermeyen would go on to design a series of tapestries of 12 scenes that commemorate the Conquest, which were likely commissioned by the sister of Charles V, Mary of Hungary, and made by Willem Pannemaker.<sup>130</sup> Despite the fact that he was not the commissioner of the tapestries, Charles V expressed great interest in seeing the series on numerous occasions, seeking updates on the work.<sup>131</sup> These tapestries were displayed for the first time at the wedding celebrations of Charles V's son, Phillip II to Mary Tudor in 1554. Naval activity is included in two of the surviving tapestries, including the *Landing in La Goletta* and *The Taking of La Goletta*. [Figs. 16 and 17] Both tapestries show at least one galley of semi-nude men, and boats of all sizes engaged in battle or battle preparations. However, where Giovanni Battista's print teems with activity, Vermeyen's designs are carefully ordered, with the figures more uniform from one to the next.

In addition to Vermeyen, Charles V also brought along a number of other artistic and literary companions, including the poets, Garcilaso de la Vega and Johannes Secundus, as well as a musician and historians.<sup>132</sup> Secundus was commissioned to pen an epic poem on the campaign, which was never realized owing to the poet's death.<sup>133</sup> While a celebrated poet now, de la Vega's poetry was probably unknown to Charles V, who instead likely knew him instead only for his skill as a soldier.<sup>134</sup> Many other written accounts of the campaign survive however: in addition to writing his own accounts of the campaign in correspondence, Charles V enlisted his secretary, the seemingly ever-present

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<sup>130</sup> Horn, *Vermeyen*, 43-47; 117-28. On the *Fructus Belli*, see especially Brown, *Tapestries*, 158-73.

<sup>131</sup> Roger d'Hulst, *Tapisseries flamandes du XIV<sup>e</sup> au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Brussels: Editions Arcade, 1960): 221.

<sup>132</sup> Horn, *Vermeyen*, 15.

<sup>133</sup> Richard Helgerson, *A Sonnet from Carthage: Garcilaso de la Vega and the New Poetry of Sixteenth-Century Europe* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007): 7-8.

<sup>134</sup> Helgerson, *Sonnet*, 7-8. See also E. C. Graf, "From Scipio to Nero to the Self: The Exemplary Politics of Stoicism in Garcilaso de la Vega's Elegies," *PMLA*, 116 (2001): 1323; see also Elias L. Rivers, *Garcilaso de la Vega: Poems* (London: Grant, 1980).

Cardinal Granvelle to write an account in French, which was translated and published in Latin, with Luis Ávila y Zúñiga's account published by Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda.<sup>135</sup> On his return from the campaign, Charles V met with Paolo Giovio personally, supplying him with information for his history.<sup>136</sup> These many literary accounts attest to the importance placed on the campaign by Charles V and his circle: never before had Italy seen such an "explosion of pageantry" than after the North African battles.<sup>137</sup> These many literary and artistic accounts attest to the popularity of the campaign. However, given the lack of specific details within Giovanni Battista's print, beyond his references to the main people involved, one could assert that he did not necessarily require any one of these sources in his creation of this print and sought only to make this victory one possible focus of his print.

Further, and far more detailed, depictions of the campaign exist than that by Giovanni Battista, including a woodcut map featuring a bird's eye view of the city of Tunis, dated 31 August, 1535, made by the printmaker, Erhard Schoen, and published in Nuremberg. [Fig. 18] The lengthy caption on the print reads:

I came, I saw, I conquered. The most Christian, most mighty, and victorious emperor Charles, the ruler of all of us, departed personally with an Armada, not seen in Christendom in many centuries, from Barcelona in Catalonia on May 31, and from Calari in Sardinia on 14 June. With favorable wind, he arrived in the kingdom of Tunis in Africa on the following day. On June 21 he stepped on land at the place known in antiquity as Carthage. He bombarded many gates, bastions, and hills, as well as attacked the overly strong fortification, known as Goleta, on July 14 gaining a divinely marvelous victory with the loss of only forty Christians horsemen, and conquering a vast number of vessels and cannon, etc. He also took on the following July 21 the royal castle and the city of Tunis with God's help, quite without losses, and plundered it. He drove out

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<sup>135</sup> Sepúlveda, *De rebus gestis Caroli Quinti*; Helgerson, *Sonnet*, 25-6.

<sup>136</sup> Helgerson, *Sonnet*, 26.

<sup>137</sup> Strong, *Art and Power*, 81.



the Turkish [emperor's] Solyman's foremost captain and lieutenant at sea, called Barbarossa, with all his helpers from the kingdom of Tunis.<sup>138</sup>

Schön's print appears to be related to an engraving by Agostino dei Musi, published in Venice by Bolognini Zalterii in 1535/1536, which also includes a lengthy caption. [Fig. 19] It appears to predate Vermeyen's monopoly and, while replete with errors, may have been based on correspondence or a lost drawing.<sup>139</sup>

Thought to be from the same year, Giulio Romano, or a member of his circle, appears to have designed the so-called "Plus Ultra" shield for Charles V, which features an allegorical scene celebrating the Holy Roman Emperor's dominance over land and sea.<sup>140</sup> [Fig. 20] Charles V stands on a highly decorated galley, surrounded by various mythological figures, while a bound woman tied to a palm tree at the lower center represents his subjugated foes, surrounded by military trophies, with a turban perched on top. This woman has been taken as a clear reference to the Emperor's triumph in his North African campaigns, and has been used to date the shield to the anti-bellum period.<sup>141</sup> It has been speculated that the shield was presented to Charles V as a gift from Duke Federico Gonzaga, who sent shipments of armor to the Emperor in 1534 and 1536.<sup>142</sup> How tantalizing to consider that Giovanni Battista himself may have designed or made the shield, and then re-visited the same subject in his *Naval Battle* print a few years later.

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<sup>138</sup> Walter L. Strauss, *The Illustrated Bartsch: German Masters of the Sixteenth Century: Erhard Schoen and Niklas Stoer*, 13 (New York: Abaris Books, 1984): 455.

<sup>139</sup> Charles Monchicourt, "Essai bibliographique sur les plans imprimés de Tripoli, Djerba et tunis-Goulettes au XVIe siècle," *Revue africaine*, 67 (1925): 405-6.

<sup>140</sup> A preparatory drawing survives in the Teylers Museum, Haarlem (Inv. No. K.16), while the shield is held in the Real Armería, Madrid (Inv. No. D.63).

<sup>141</sup> *Carolus*, 410.

<sup>142</sup> *Carolus*, 410.

In short, there was no absence of material concerning Charles V's North African campaign to which Giovanni Battista's print might be added.<sup>143</sup> The proliferation of these various accounts likely resulted from a very deliberate propaganda campaign by Charles V, but also fulfilled a popular demand for such accounts.<sup>144</sup> Vermeyen's tapestries, made over a decade later, continued to celebrate the North African conquests of Charles V, transforming a "relatively insignificant military victory into a culturally significant moment in the development of sixteenth-century notions of imperial power."<sup>145</sup> The Ottomans were foes of Charles V and his allies, and these tapestries have been analyzed as "a fusion of a contemporary imperial event with its carefully identified classical analogue...an oscillation between past and present."<sup>146</sup> The same might be said of Giovanni Battista's print *Charles V and the New Argonauts*, which could be both a generic representation of a naval battle from ancient history and could also be taken as a reference to contemporary military affairs. Vermeyen's designs, and countless other sources, convincingly suggest that Giovanni Battista's print would most probably have been received by a sophisticated audience, given its subtle references to a well-known contemporary battle.

The presence of Ferrante Gonzaga in the guise of the hero, Hercules, along with the Gonzaga/Giovanni Battista emblem of the winged thunderbolt might identify a very specific intended audience for the print. While Giovanni Battista may have hoped that the

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<sup>143</sup> A survey of the dispatches, letters and chronicles concerning the campaign can be found in the following: Georg Voight, *Die Geschichtschreibung über den Zug Karls V gegen Tunis* (Leipzig, 1872); Louis Prosper Gachard, *Collection des voyages des souverains des Pays-Bas*, III, (1875): x-xxvi; Arthur Irving Andrews, "The Campaign of the Emperor Charles V against Tunis and Kheir-ed-Din Barbarossa," Ph.D. Dissertation (Harvard University, 1905).

<sup>144</sup> Tanner, *Descendants*, 113-8.

<sup>145</sup> Lisa Jardine and Jerry Brotton, *Global Interests: Renaissance Art between East and West* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000): 86. On the tapestries, see also Horn, *Vermeyen*, 9.

<sup>146</sup> Jardine, *Global*, 86.

print would find favor with the Imperial court, he likely invented the engraving with Ferrante, the Gonzaga and Mantua in mind specifically, drawing inspiration from the *Argonautica* and *Orlando Furioso*. Ferrante was rewarded significantly for the part he played in the Tunis campaign, being elevated to the Viceroy of Sicily in 1535, a role he held until 1546. Ultimately, Giovanni Battista looked to commemorate this Gonzaga victory in his print. According to Ferrante's biographer, Guliano Gosellini, this soldier was "more inspired by contemporary events than by those of former times."<sup>147</sup>

### **A Sleeping Cupid: Michelangelo Challenged?**

Not surprisingly, it would seem that Giovanni Battista created a number of his prints with the Gonzaga in mind. A small print featuring a figure of Cupid sleeping, measuring just 4 x 5.7 inches, was likely intended to celebrate Isabella d'Este. [Fig. 21] In contrast to Giovanni Battista's large-scale so-called *Naval Battle* and *David and Goliath* prints, his intimate *Sleeping Cupid* recalls his background in metal-working. The print is signed not with a lengthier inscription, but simply with a monogram, "IBM" and dated 1538.

In the print, a nude cupid lays asleep on a small bed. One leg rests on the bed and his other leg dangles, with his foot resting on a toppled vase. His left arm cradles a quiver of arrows, while his left hand holds a bow and single arrow, his index finger pointing to the ground, and, significantly, Giovanni Battista's monogram. His feathered wings seem to be folded into themselves, emerging from behind his left shoulder, framing his face. A crown of flowers nestles in his curly hair, making it challenging to separate the curls from the blossoms of the crown. The perspective in the small print is skewed slightly and the

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<sup>147</sup> Brown, *Tapestries*, 165; Guliano Gosellini, *Vita del prencipe don Ferrando Gonzaga in tre libri divisa* (Milan: P. G. Pontio, 1574).

bedding seems to engulf the sleeping figure. A finely wrought headboard features an acanthus scroll, and sits on circular feet, seemingly too insubstantial to support such a bed. A canopy hangs over the bed, its drapery mingling with the bedclothes, opened to reveal the sleeping cherub. Cupid himself appears similar to a toddler with his distended stomach and chubby limbs. Two vases at the side of the bed are, at first sight, unnecessary to the tableau. The toppled vase on which Cupid's foot rests contains two rose stems, while the second, upright vase holds two branches of thorns. The two vases are not without their significance: while one contains roses, symbolizing Venus and the beautiful side-effects of love, the thorns could serve as a reminder of the cruelty of love.<sup>148</sup>

It appears likely that Giovanni Battista created this print in order to capitalize on the fame surrounding the many figures and images of Cupid belonging to Isabella d'Este, whose collection included an antique sculpture, thought to have been made by Praxiteles and mentioned by Cicero and Pliny.<sup>149</sup> This, along with a second sculpture of Cupid, recorded as being by Michelangelo as early as 1542, in Isabella d'Este's collection, likely served as the inspiration for Giovanni Battista's print.<sup>150</sup> Made in 1495/1496, this sculpture was made famous for its beginnings owing to Vasari's account of how this

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<sup>148</sup> These interpretations have been made in the case of Bronzino's *Allegory of Love* from 1541, now at the National Gallery of Art, London. On this painting, see especially: Lynette M. F. Bosch, "Bronzino's London 'Allegory': Love Versus Time," *Source: Notes in the History of Art*, 9 (1990): 30-35; Charles Hope, "Bronzino's Allegory in the National Gallery," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 45 (1982): 239-243; Iris Cheney, "Bronzino's London 'Allegory': Venus, Cupid, Virtue and Time," *Source: Notes in the History of Art*, 2 (1987): 12-18; Margaret Healy, "Bronzino's London Allegory and the Art of Syphilis," *Oxford Art Journal*, 20 (1997): 3-11; Deborah Parker, *Bronzino: Renaissance Painter As Poet* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

<sup>149</sup> Campbell, *Cabinet*, 95.

<sup>150</sup> This statue was first recorded as being by Michelangelo in 1542 by Odoardo Stivini. It is difficult to say definitively if Giovanni Battista knew that this "ancient" sculpture was actually by Michelangelo. Campbell, *Cabinet*, 92. See also Kathleen Weil-Garris Brandt, Cristina Acidini Luchinat, James Draper and Nicholas Penny, eds, *La giovinezza di Michelangelo*, exh. cat. (Florence: Skira, 1999): 317-23 and Michael Hirst, "The Artist at Rome, 1496-1501," *Making and Meaning: The Young Michelangelo*, exh. cat. (London and New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994): 13-80.

“ancient” sculpture was actually by Michelangelo.<sup>151</sup> In order to make the sculpture appear antique, the sculptor buried it, selling it to Cardinal Raffaele Riario, who, upon learning that it was not ancient, demanded his money back.<sup>152</sup> In 1502, the “ancient” sculpture made it into the collection of Isabella d’Este in Mantua, although she may not have known its maker at the time of the acquisition.<sup>153</sup> Sold to Charles I with so many other Mantuan works of art, the sculpture appears to have been destroyed in the 1698 fire at Whitehall Palace.<sup>154</sup> According to the inventory from 1542, Michelangelo’s sculpture was about 4 *spanne* long, made from Carrara marble, and probably, lacking his bow.<sup>155</sup> If it can be identified with a drawing in an album of sculpture formerly at Whitehall, then the cupid most probably lay on his side, resting on a stone covered with drapery.<sup>156</sup>

While it is impossible to determine the extent to which Giovanni Battista may have had access to these sculptures, he may at least have known about Isabella’s collection and the lore concerning the making of these works, as well as the mythological symbolism associated with such a figure. A sleeping Cupid, exhausted from his matchmaking, might represent dormant love, only temporarily suspended.<sup>157</sup> Concerning the ideas regarding a sleeping Cupid as dormant love, a literary *topos* arose in the sixteenth century about sleeping statues, wherein they were imbued with a voice, asking that an interloper not wake the sleeping figure.<sup>158</sup> Complicit with this is the existence of a viewer, for whom the work of art is “alive, yet immobile,” as if the sculpture, or in this

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<sup>151</sup> Giorgio Vasari, *The Lives of the Artists*, Trans. George Bull (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1979): 334.

<sup>152</sup> Vasari, *Lives*, 334.

<sup>153</sup> Ruth Rubinstein, “Michelangelo’s Lost *Sleeping Cupid* and Fetti’s *Vertumnus* and *Pomona*,” *Journal of the Courtauld and Warburg Institutes*, 49 (1986): 257-9. Campbell, *Cabinet*, 92.

<sup>154</sup> Rubenstein, “Michelangelo’s,” 257.

<sup>155</sup> Campbell, *Cabinet*, 97.

<sup>156</sup> Paul Norton, “The Lost Sleeping Cupid of Michelangelo,” *The Art Bulletin*, 39 (1957): 251-7.

<sup>157</sup> Campbell, *Cabinet*, 98-9.

<sup>158</sup> Campbell, *Cabinet*, 95-6.

case, print, might come to life if only the sleeping subject should wake.<sup>159</sup> If indeed Isabella were an intended viewer of the print, then the arrangement places her, or any viewer, in the guise of Psyche, who illicitly looked upon Cupid while he slept. In 1491, Niccolò da Correggio dedicated a poem to Isabella entitled *Psiche*, in which he retold her story taken from Apuleius's *Metamorphoses*.<sup>160</sup> In the same way that Psyche might admire Cupid's beauty, whether alive or made from stone, so too might Isabella, or any other viewer, admire the beauty created by the hand of Giovanni Battista. Cupid's hair, carved so carefully, and ornamented with a wreath of flowers, enhances his immortal beauty.

The sculptures by Praxiteles and Michelangelo were highly prized objects in Isabella d'Este's collection, with the Michelangelo *Cupid* called a "modern work without compare."<sup>161</sup> Both were the subject of many verses, and in the case of a verse by Antonio Tebaldeo, Michelangelo's *Cupid* stands in for Isabella herself as an object of love and devotion.<sup>162</sup> Thus, in the case of Giovanni Battista's print, Isabella might also be present not only as Psyche, but also as Cupid himself, whose beauty, like Isabella's, even in her old age, demands admiration.

Isabella's collection of Cupids went beyond her love for antiquities, speaking not only to her maternal interests, but also to her interest in a "rich vernacular and classical tradition of love poetry, which would otherwise be precluded under the terms of a woman's access to humanist learning and the *vita contemplativa*."<sup>163</sup> Dated 1538, one

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<sup>159</sup> Campbell, *Cabinet*, 96; Leonard Barkin, *Unearthing the Past: Archaeology and Aesthetics in the Making of Renaissance Culture* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1999): 243.

<sup>160</sup> Campbell, *Cabinet*, 104-5.

<sup>161</sup> Campbell, *Cabinet*, 92.

<sup>162</sup> Campbell, *Cabinet*, 97-8.

<sup>163</sup> Campbell, *Cabinet*, 102-3.

year before Isabella's death, the print was created within her lifetime and may have served as a small treasure that celebrated this collector of *amorini*, a commemoration of her beauty and her many accomplishments. While it seems apparent that Giovanni Battista created the print with Isabella and her collection in mind, it would have made a handsome gift to any viewer, perhaps as a token of love for a woman. As Guido Rebecchini has successfully shown, the Gonzaga collections served as a model for other Mantuan families as they amassed their own, typically more modest collections, especially in the case of the Maffei, who owned two paintings by Coreggio, both of Venus and Cupid and likely commissioned by Nicola Maffei.<sup>164</sup> It is possible that Giovanni Battista created this, and many other of his prints with these local collectors in mind.

In engraving an image of the sleeping Cupid, Giovanni Battista was offering his viewers an alternative to the famous sculptures by Praxiteles and Michelangelo. Diminutive in size, Giovanni Battista's print takes on a precious quality; his short, hatched lines that make up the engraving result from careful carving and encourage close looking. While Michelangelo's sculpture and its lore was already playing with the concept of *paragone*, that is, a contest with ancient sculpture, Giovanni Battista was issuing a challenge both to Praxiteles, and if he indeed he knew of the "ancient" sculpture as a work of Michelangelo's, to this modern master. In the same way that Hendrick Goltzius "win[s] the implied *paragone* of ancients and moderns through his inimitable

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<sup>164</sup> Rebecchini explores these collections, especially those belonging to the Maffei, Castiglione, Strozzi and Calandra families in *Private*, especially 76-78; on the two paintings, see also Guido Rebecchini, "New Light on Coreggio's Two Venuses," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 60 (1997): 272-275.

command of one of the *nova reperta* (new inventions unknown to the ancients), the art of engraving,” according to Walter Melion, so too does Giovanni Battista.<sup>165</sup>

In the same way that the epigrams concerning the Praxitelean Cupid sought to explore the sculpture as an “expression of the passion of the artist who carved it,” so too for Giovanni Battista:

Praxiteles, who stooped his proud neck for my sandals to thread on,  
wrought me with his captive hands. For working me in bronze, he gave  
me, that very love that was given within him, to Phyrne, an offering of  
friendship...<sup>166</sup>

Thus, Giovanni Battista’s *Sleeping Cupid* could also be seen as a celebration of Isabella d’Este’s famed collection. When casting this print within such a context, Cupid’s right hand, in which he holds his bow and a single arrow, is at once imbued with significance.<sup>167</sup> Cupid’s hand, with its pointed index finger appears as if an engraver’s hand might, were it holding a burin. With the arrow pointing up, rather than down, Cupid is doubly disarmed: both in slumber and with an ineffectual arrow. If the arrow were to stand in for an artistic instrument, Giovanni Battista succeeds at disarming, and conquering, his artistic competitors, with his own hand. Cupid’s finger, which points down, directs the viewer’s gaze to the monogram of his creator. This tiny, beautiful god is not only the progeny of Venus, but also of Giovanni Battista Scultori.

### **Conclusion: Conquering Death**

The necrological records of Mantua reflect that Giovanni Battista died in Mantua on 29 October, 1575, after an 18-day battle with fever in his 72<sup>nd</sup> year, likely the result of

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<sup>165</sup> Walter Melion, “Memorabilia aliquot Romanae strenuitatis exempla: The Thematics of Artisinal Virtue in Hendrick Goltzius’s ‘Roman Heroes’.” *Modern Language Notes*, 110 (1995): 1091.

<sup>166</sup> Campbell, *Cabinet*, 97.

<sup>167</sup> Melion suggests in his analysis of a print of Venus by Goltzius, that what the arrows are to Cupid, so the burin is to Goltzius, thus thematizing the work’s own mode of production. “Love and Artisanry in Henrick Goltzius’s *Venus, Bacchus and Ceres* of 1606,” *Art History*, 16 (1993): 69.



plague, which was in the city at the time.<sup>168</sup> While no trace of a will survives, his legacy continued through his surviving prints, and the lessons and source material that he passed on to his son, daughter and Ghisi. Giovanni Battista used his printmaking as a conduit for his own creative impulses and intellectual considerations, while also possibly providing an additional source of income. His prints offered a variety of different readings, none of which were essential to appreciating the works, but all of which attest to his sophisticated grasp of the art made by his contemporaries and predecessors, of the ongoing debates of his time concerning *paragone*, and also of contemporary events and people that might serve as a valence through which to see his subjects. These multiple readings and ambiguities in his prints would be useful not only to fellow artists, desirous of a model from which to work, but also to those who were familiar with the Gonzaga's relationship with Charles V and his military campaigns, or with Isabella d'Este's art collection. The rich, courtly environment of Mantua and the Gonzaga was the perfect setting for Giovanni Battista not only to make his prints, but also to promote them. His apparent concerns with the status of the sixteenth-century engraver, as not merely a copyist, but as a creative artist himself, highlight a problem of identity that plagued many of Giovanni Battista's printmaking contemporaries and successors.

Giovanni Battista created engravings that celebrated the virtues of the medium. The mutable meanings of his subjects were best executed in print, and, it was probably hoped, became a talking point as they were circulated in a way that few other artistic media could be. Giovanni Battista capitalized on the close looking necessary of most prints, including minute details that only a careful viewer might notice, such as the

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<sup>168</sup> "M. Gio. Batta scultore nella q.ta del'Unicorno morto di febre informa giorni deciotto d'eta d'anni...no. 72." ASMn, Entry 340 in the Registra Necrologica, Archivio Gonzaga, Busta 12, 1575; See also: Davari, Busta 3, 110; Bertolotti, 75. d'Arco also records his death in his archival study, *Cinque*, 13.

winged thunderbolts in *David and Goliath* and the *Naval Battle*, just visible to the naked eye. The virtuosity of his engraved line, in some instances artificially elongated as in *David and Goliath*, demonstrates the great capability of his hand, and the potential for engraving as an art of artifice. Finally, his small prints such as the *Sleeping Cupid* were easily transportable and could be treasured and displayed in such a way that was impossible for large-scale sculpture like Michelangelo's *Cupid*. Printmaking was the way in which Giovanni Battista sought to "conquer" his contemporaries, celebrating the many ways in which engraving might surpass the other, seemingly less flexible, arts.

The theme of conquest characterizes many of Giovanni Battista's prints, which can, it seems, be taken as a statement by the artist of his desire to conquer his artistic adversaries, both ancient and contemporary. Vying for artistic projects, and perhaps desirous of a courtly salary, Giovanni Battista sought to emphasize his artistic prowess through his printmaking, a decidedly non-courtly medium. Using the relatively humble medium of copperplate engraving, Giovanni Battista was demonstrating the creative contribution that a printmaker might bring to the "reproductive" process. His *David*, small but powerful, exemplified the potential of printmaking, able to conquer the artistic giants whose monumental stature could be cut to size by the modest burin.

## **Chapter 2: An Artistic Slave: Adamo Scultori's Reproductive Prints**

An undated print that bears Adamo Scultori's (1530?-1587) two-letter monogram presents a compelling lens through which to view his varied engraved output and career. *The Allegory of Servitude*, measuring 8 by 5.4 inches, features a dignified youth who seemingly effortlessly carries a yolk over one shoulder, while shackles and a ball drag behind his feet, caught in mid-step.<sup>169</sup> [Fig. 22] The inscription, which is intrinsic to the print from the initial state, reads: "the more patient the slave, the happier."<sup>170</sup> This happy slave is not an invention of Adamo's. Rather, it owes its creation to a print of the same subject and appearance made by Andrea Mantegna or a member of his school, now in the Rothschild Collection, in the Musée du Louvre, and was likely intended originally to play a role in Mantegna's *Triumphs*.<sup>171</sup> [Fig. 23] However, the potency of the image and its significance to Adamo is not diminished by the fact that it is, in essence, a copy; rather its origins enhance such potency. With it, Adamo is issuing a strong statement about the nature of "reproductive" engraving, the way in which the majority of his corpus can be categorized, and about the artistic process itself. Adamo, whose engraved work is almost exclusively after the work of other artists, found success, commercial or otherwise, with his "reproductive" prints, mirroring the graceful ease of his slave and the relatively optimistic message of his *Allegory*.

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<sup>169</sup> On this print, see Gioconda Albricci, "Le incisioni di Adamo Scultori," *I quaderni del conoscitore di stampe*, 22 (1974): 41-4; Bellini, *Scultori*, 124-28.

<sup>170</sup> "SERVVS EO LAETIOR QVO PATIENTIOR"

<sup>171</sup> A.E. Popham and P. Pouncey, *Italian drawings in the British Museum, the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries* (London: British Museum Press, 1950): no. 168. Certainly, this print is also related to Mantegna's *Triumphs*, after which there is a drawing, made by Alessandro Casolano (1552-1606), now also in the Louvre (Inv. No. 10739), which features several standing figures, thought to have been inspired by Mantegna's *Triumphs*. The figure to the far left bears a striking similarity to Mantegna's figure, and offers an original context for which the figure was likely designed, as a figure from the *Triumphs*.

Three drawings of the same subject also survive, although none were the original source for the school of Mantegna print. These secondary drawings survive in the British Museum (Inv. No. 1895,0915.776), the Musée des Beaux-Arts, Rennes (Inv. No. 794.1.2836), and at the Albertina in Vienna. [Figs. 24-6] The drawing at the British Museum most closely corresponds with Adamo's print, and unlike the Mantegna school print, faces in the same direction. The Vienna version is the most different: a mountainous landscape has been sketched in, populated by swiftly drawn figures. The words "Sic mea vota", (thus are my vows) led Erica Tietze-Conrat to interpret this drawing as an allegory of marriage.<sup>172</sup> A further contemporary version is a frontispiece for an early pattern book from 1530 by the Florentine, Francesco Pellegrino, called *La fleur de la science de portraicture et patrons de broderie, façon arabicque et ytaliquei*, published in Paris.<sup>173</sup> [Fig. 27]

While there are some notable differences between the frontispiece, Adamo's engraving and the three drawings, such as the translucence of the woman's dress in the illustration and the motto on her banderole ("*Exitus Acta Probat*," the result justifies the act), the subject remains consistent: a figure carries a yoke and wears a ball and chain shackled to her ankles. As in the case of Adamo's *Allegory*, the inclusion of an allegory of Servitude as a frontispiece for a pattern book could imply that in the act of reproduction one could be a slave to the source. The survival of multiple versions of the same figure suggests the popularity of the subject of Adamo's print. Further, to be a servant to a profession, a cause or a person could be seen as a universal human condition, and one in which an artist such as Adamo could relate.

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<sup>172</sup> Erica Tietze-Conrat, *Mantegna* (London: Phaidon, 1955) 208.

<sup>173</sup> W. McAllister Johnson, "Mantegna and Francisque Pellegrine," *Journal of Warburg and Courtauld Studies*, 32 (1969): 394.

In a series of letters from 1548, Pietro Aretino counsils his friend, the engraver, Enea Vico, on the benefits of remaining an engraver, rather than entering into the service of a prince as a painter.<sup>174</sup> At the time, according to Vasari, Vico had been working for a brief period in 1545/6 in Florence, making engravings after Vasari's designs and other prints for Duke Cosimo I de Medici, after drawings by Michelangelo.<sup>175</sup> In a letter from April, 1548, Aretino writes:

Concerning leaving the excellence of beautiful art, in which you are alone (i.e. the best), in order to transfer to the service of the court, where the art is less than mediocre, forces me to advise you, that it is not a novel concern to work in such a way as a servant. Be warned that you will not be free to speak the truth to the ears of the great master. One needs to always stay silent, or at all times to agree in what he says.<sup>176</sup>

In a second letter from one month later, Aretino offers further advice:

...the best is living free in the first rank, among the engravers of other's drawings, than to die in a number at the end, straining to acquire a [piece of] bread, under the strain of a prince. In conclusion, freedom is more felicitous, if one is able to buy life, then servitude is a misery...Resolve then to enjoy the commodious pleasures, conscious that it is better 1000 times to work thus than it is to work in this city, for that leisure appears in all the places of Italy.<sup>177</sup>

Shortly after this letter exchange, Vico moved to Venice, where he worked more or less as a free agent, until 1563, when he was summoned to the court of Ferrara, to work for Alfonso D'Este, Duke of Ferrara.<sup>178</sup> Clearly, Vico took Aretino's advice to heart, and persisted in working as an independent engraver for as long as possible. However, like Giovanni Battista Scultori, Vico's career benefited from an introduction to Cardinal Granvelle. In 1550, just a few short years after the above exchange, and at the same time

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<sup>174</sup> On Vico, see Rosemarie Mulcahy, "Enea Vico's Proposed Triumph of Charles V." *Print Quarterly*, 19 (2002): 331-340.

<sup>175</sup> Sharon Gregory, *Vasari and the Renaissance Print* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012): 295.

<sup>176</sup> *Lettere sull'arte di Pietro Aretino*, eds. Fidenzio Pertile and Carlo Cordié, II (Milan: Edizioni del Milione, 1957-60, 222-3.

<sup>177</sup> *Lettere*, II, 226.

<sup>178</sup> Ireneo Affò, *Memorie degli scrittori e letterati parmigiani*, 4 (Parma, 1793): 107-21.

that Granvelle was corresponding with and commissioning work from Giovanni Battista Scultori, Aretino wrote to Granvelle recommending Vico as “one of the most gifted and famous printmakers in Italy.”<sup>179</sup> It is perhaps not mere coincidence that Giovanni Battista’s correspondence with Granvelle seemingly ceased in about 1550: perhaps the Cardinal preferred the work of Vico to that of the Mantuan engravers, or alternatively, perhaps the fire of 1550 led to a gap in their operations.

It is very enticing to see Adamo’s print, the *Allegory of Servitude*, in the same vein as the discussion brought to light in Vico and Aretino’s exchange. While it is improbable that Adamo was directly aware of Aretino’s advice to Vico, it is very possible that he and his family were concerned, like Vico, with the direction in which the industry of printmaking was moving. Adamo and his family, Giovanni Battista in particular, understood the pitfalls of working in a smaller city, and were likely torn between the advantages and disadvantages to being one of a few craftsmen in Mantua and the potential opportunities made possible in a metropolis, where the print industry flourished, such as Rome or Venice. Giovanni Battista appears to have been hired by the Gonzaga only intermittently, forcing him, as has been seen in the first chapter, to seek work outside of Mantua, in Verona and elsewhere. Indeed, it is very likely that Giovanni Battista’s experience led Adamo and his contemporary, Giorgio Ghisi, to leave Mantua for Rome and strike out independently, in circa 1566 and circa 1545 respectively. Yet, instead of working in the same manner as many of his printmaking colleagues, that is working at the behest of publishers such as Antonio Lafreri, Adamo simply became a publisher, issuing his own works in much the same way as he and his family had done in Mantua. Thus, his *Allegory of Servitude*, could serve both as a declaration of

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<sup>179</sup> *Lettere*, III, 291-292.

independence, and a reminder of the “slavish” nature of reproductive printmaking. That the majority of Adamo’s prints appear to reproduce the work of other artists very closely makes this print all the more intriguing. He, like Vico and Aretino, likely appreciated “living free among the engravings of others’ drawings, than to die in a number at the end, straining to acquire bread under the strain of a prince.”<sup>180</sup>

### **Slave to his training**

It is thought that Adamo was born circa 1530, most probably in Mantua.<sup>181</sup> He appears to have spent his first 36 years in Mantua, after which he spent his final 21 years in Rome.<sup>182</sup> Giovanni Battista was eager to promote the work of Adamo from early on, writing to Cardinal Granvelle on 31 December, 1547, and enclosing not only his own drawings of the *Battle of the Amazons*, but also a “print newly cut in copper” by Adamo, because “I wanted Your Lordship to have the first of all his engravings.”<sup>183</sup> In fact, Adamo appears to have been engraving from circa 1541, when he inscribed on an early *Virgin and Child*, after a model made by Giovanni Battista, that it was made when he was 11.<sup>184</sup> [Fig. 28]

Adamo has been the subject of few exclusive studies. His prints made after works by Michelangelo are most frequently discussed, often derided for their poor quality, held up as an example of what Vasari disparaged in his 1568 edition of the *Vite* and which Domenicus Lampsonius called, in 1565: “these ignorant three penny engravers who anger me, are born for vituperation not only by those excellent masters whose works they so

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<sup>180</sup> *Lettere*, II, 226.

<sup>181</sup> Bellini, *Scultori*, 28.

<sup>182</sup> Bellini, *Scultori*, 29.

<sup>183</sup> Lincoln, *Invention*, 119 .

<sup>184</sup> Parshall, *Print*, 402, n. 78.

cruelly spoil and maim, but by all Italy...".<sup>185</sup> Paolo Bellini considered Adamo together with his much younger sister, Diana, in his *L'opera incisa di Adamo e Diana Scultori*, in which he has established a chronology of Adamo's prints and ably considered his artistic sources.<sup>186</sup> Bellini's study has its roots in d'Arco's study of the Mantuan printmakers from 1840, listing 34 prints, plus his 71 prints after Michelangelo's Sistine Figures, as those by Adamo.<sup>187</sup> Massari briefly considered Adamo's prints after Giulio Romano in her monumental study of the master's graphic and printed legacy.<sup>188</sup>

A total of 96 engravings are given to Adamo's Mantuan period by Paolo Bellini in his catalogue, which account for approximately two thirds of Adamo's total output. On his arrival in Rome, he seems to have engraved considerably less than he had in Mantua. The earliest works include the *Virgin and Child* mentioned previously and twelve additional prints made up primarily of one or two figures, many of which are signed with Adamo's early monogram (a large A enclosing a small s). Four of these early prints that do not relate to Giulio Romano can instead be traced to prints by Marcantonio Raimondi. Most compelling is his *Two Ladies with a Baby*, which conflates exactly, in reverse, two different prints by Raimondi. [Figs. 29-31] Adamo has copied Raimondi's prints very closely, matching his lines to those of the master's, taking great care in the placement of each stroke. It seems probable that Giovanni Battista, in his training of Adamo, set him the task of copying and integrating figures from these two different Raimondi prints, perhaps hoping to foster his skills of invention and quotation. Adamo's more advanced

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<sup>185</sup> Giorgio Vasari, *Le Opere Di Giorgio Vasari*. ed. Gaetano Milanesi, Vol. V (Florence: G.C. Sansoni, 1878): 632; Boorsch, *Ghisi*, 164; Barbara Wisch, "Vested Interest: Redressing Jews on Michelangelo's Sistine Ceiling," *Artibus et Historiae*, 24 (2003): 167; Walter Melion, "Hendrick Goltzius's Project of Reproductive Engraving," *Art History*, 13 (1990): 469.

<sup>186</sup> Bellini, *Scultori*. He revisited Adamo and Giorgio Ghisi in "Ulteriori contributi per la conoscenza degli incisori mantovani Adamo Scultori e Giorgio Ghisi," *Rassegna di studi e di notizie*, 13 (1986): 21-52.

<sup>187</sup> d'Arco, *Cinque*, 36-9, 87-97.

<sup>188</sup> Massari, *Giulio*, 112-140.



Mantuan prints are noticeably better executed than those in his earlier years, and which feature more complicated figures and scenes. Most scholars also place the 72 small prints (71 figures, plus a frontispiece) that Adamo made after the figures of Michelangelo's *Prophets and Sibyls*, *Ancestors*, and *Ignudi* from the Sistine ceiling into this category, representing a substantial part of his corpus.<sup>189</sup> It is clear that Adamo's engravings after Michelangelo are made after drawings, and, understandably, not the chapel itself, because

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<sup>189</sup> Bellini, *Scultori*, 64-5. The drawings of the *Prophets and Sibyls* and the *Ancestors* with which Adamo worked remain, as yet, unidentified, however, the drawings on which Adamo's *Ignudi* are based appear to have survived. In their catalogue from 1949, A.E. Popham and J. Wilde identify twelve drawings of the *Ignudi* that probably served as Adamo's models and which are in the Royal Collection at Windsor Castle (Inv. Nos. 0634-0645). A. E. Popham and J. Wilde, *The Italian Drawings of the XV and XVI Centuries in the Collection of his Majesty the King at Windsor Castle* (London: Phaidon, 1949): 267, nos. 469-80. Made by the same draughtsman with pen and brown ink and brown wash, the twelve drawings are beautifully executed and appropriate models for engravings. The drawings in the Royal Collection are almost double in size to Adamo's engravings (9.8 x 6.7 inches), but this should not have deterred the engraver. The drawings do appear to be very similar to Adamo's engravings, especially in the way in which he has rendered the drapery, the folds of the cushions, the finger and toenails, and the placement of the highlighting. The differences between the prints and drawings are relatively insignificant: Adamo has changed the fruits on the garlands that many of the figures hold, such as in the case of Inv. Nos. 0636 and 0637. The many similarities between the prints and drawings suggest convincingly that the Windsor drawings (or ones very similar) appear to have been those used by Adamo. The engravings are relatively small, like much of Adamo's printed oeuvre, measuring on average 5.5 x 4 inches, appropriate for inclusion in a small octavo album. It has been suggested that Adamo made the engravings towards the end of his time in Mantua, presumably circa 1560-1566, however, he does not appear to have formally published them until twenty years later. Bellini, *Scultori*, 64. Each of the prints are numbered in the lower right hand corner and each bear Adamo's monogram, an overlapped "AS," which provides the basis for dating the prints to this particular period. Bartsch proposed that the series of prints may be organized as follows: *Ignudi*, *Prophets and Sibyls*, and *Ancestors*, but in fact the order seems hardly pertinent to a viewer's appreciation. Bartsch, 1813, XV, 426, nos. 27-98. The prints were first published by Adamo in 1585, with a simple frontispiece that said, "MICHEL ANGELUS BONAROTUS PINXIT ADAM SCULPTOR MANTUANUS INCIDIT." A second edition was produced by engraver Christoforo Blanco, who married Adamo's widow, and who, in circa 1613, acquired the "Libro de la Volta di Michelangelo pezzi 74" from Adamo's sons. Pagani, "Review", 77; Antonino Bertolotti, *Artisti Francesi in Roma nei secoli XV, XVI, XVII* (Mantua, 1886): 95-96. For this edition, Blanco himself provided an engraved portrait of Michelangelo, bringing the number of prints included to 73. There were then at least two subsequent editions produced by the Roman publisher Giovanni Battista de Rossi (c. 1601-1678), who most likely acquired the plates from Blanco or his heirs. Carlo Losi, a Roman publisher who was active from circa 1757 to 1805, produced the final edition. Losi acquired a batch of Scultori plates, for he published a number of engravings made by Adamo's sister, Diana, and also by Giovanni Battista. The number of editions of Adamo's Sistine figures testifies to their significant popularity: they appear to have been collected and consulted by a number of artists. For example, in an album of drawings that belonged to Nicolo Pio, now preserved in the Gabinetto dei Disegni, Rome, is a drawing of Michelangelo's Ruth, almost certainly taken from Adamo's engraving. Simonetta Prosperi Valenti Rodino, "Drawings from the Collection of Nicola Pio in Rome," *Master Drawings*, 21 (1983): 142.

four of the prints include the ancestors that were destroyed in 1535, when Michelangelo commenced work on the *Last Judgment*.<sup>190</sup>

A distinction should be made between the prints that Adamo likely made as part of his training as an engraver from the early Mantuan phases and which may not have held any commercial value, and those that were made expressly to have commercial appeal, such as his prints after Michelangelo, and thus could have been sold or given to a collector. Of the approximately 130 plates that Adamo engraved, all but *six* of them made their way via other, later publishers, who post-date Adamo, to the Calcografia Nazionale, Rome, where many of them survive today.<sup>191</sup> This suggests that when he moved from Mantua to Rome in circa 1566, Adamo most likely brought most of his plates with him. He appears to have left only the earliest plates behind, presumably because they held no commercial value to him, and which were produced possibly only as part of his training, or perhaps because they perished. Among the printmakers examined in this dissertation, Adamo alone appears to have preserved his training prints. The survival of these training prints may suggest that his were not destroyed in the *casa degli stampatori* fire in 1550, while those by Giovanni Battista and Giorgio Ghisi do not survive and may have burned.

### **Slave to a Master**

Where Giovanni Battista's prints that relate to designs by Giulio Romano seem less to replicate, and more to seek inspirations from the original sources, Adamo appears to adhere much more closely to the designs by the master. If Adamo was already engraving by the age of 11, born circa 1530, he would have been around 16 at the time of

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<sup>190</sup> Bellini, *Scultori*, 98-100.

<sup>191</sup> These six include the first and second *Virgin and Child*, *Two covered ladies*, *Putto with chains*, *Head of Hercules*, and *Two Ladies and a Baby*.

Giulio Romano's death in 1546. While unlikely that Adamo had much interaction with Giulio Romano, the latter's art played a significant role in Adamo's career. A great many of Adamo's surviving prints appear to have been based on designs by Giulio Romano, or drawings that the court artist likely held in his own collection, transferred to Adamo most probably by Giovanni Battista. From what can be seen in the surviving source material for his prints, Adamo appears to have largely reproduced the compositions of Giulio Romano without significant alteration, a notable departure from the model set in the engravings made by his father. Unlike his father, who worked on at least one occasion as a draughtsman, there is no indication that either Adamo or Diana were accomplished draughtsmen themselves. It was not essential that an engraver be able to draw with skill, but it would certainly have aided in one's ability to design inventions.

As an example, Adamo's print, *Fishermen*, was probably made towards the end of his time in Mantua. [Fig. 32] The print follows closely the composition designed by Giulio Romano for a small medallion in the ceiling of the Camera dei Venti at the Palazzo Te, painted by Agostino Mozzanea in 1527-8, who was assisted by Giovanni Battista.<sup>192</sup> [Fig. 33] An intermediate drawing by Giulio's hand survives in the Musée du Louvre (Inv. No. 3560), which likely provided a model for Adamo's print. [Fig. 34] The drawing is in the same orientation as the print, featuring wide grid lines, which can be taken as further evidence for transfer (either in the process of painting the fresco, or in the engraving of the plate). In the making of the engraving, Adamo has followed Giulio's design extremely closely, taking care to engrave even the folds of fabric worn by the fishermen, and the expressions of each face. His two minor departures from the drawing

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<sup>192</sup> Konrad Oberhuber, *Giulio Romano* (Florence: Giunti, 1989): 353.

can be seen in his filling in of the water, where he created lined waves, and in the net. This print can be seen as nothing other than reproductive.

### **Slave to Antiquity**

However, Adamo's adherence to his source material and the absence of original contributions in his prints should not indicate necessarily that he lacked talent as an engraver. Rather, his ability to copy designs closely recommended him as an able printmaker of certain subjects. His technical skill and loyalty to a design, rather than a creative inventiveness, made him ideal for reproducing, among many other things, the carving found on ancient gems. His selection of certain subjects suggests that he had an eye for producing prints that held commercial appeal. It is useful to consider that the original composition for a number of Adamo's prints appear to have come from ancient carved gems, many of which are likely to have been transmitted to him through now lost drawings or casts by Giulio or Giovanni Battista. The link between gem carving and the *nova reperta*, or new art of engraving, is undeniable and likely resonated with such artists as Adamo. Concerning gem carving, in 1556, the Italian physician, Gerolamo Cardano, discusses the challenges posed by gem or seal carving, saying:

For those who sculpt make that which they see: those who engrave see one thing and make another: and when they see, they make not, and when they make, they see not.<sup>193</sup>

Adamo and his fellow engravers faced the same difficulties in visualizing the progress of one's work on the plate, best evaluated only after a print was made. At the very least, a successful engraver had to verify the accuracy of his carving in the midst of his action.

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<sup>193</sup> *De la Subilité*, Paris 1556, fol. 320r-v, as cited in Walter Melion, "Memorabilia aliquot Romanae strenuitatis exempla: The Thematics of Artisinal Virtue in Hendrick Goltzius's 'Roman Heroes'." *Modern Language Notes*, 110 (1995): 1114-5.

As a result, engraving (in any material) is by a degree more difficult than sculpting in that a sculptor might see the results of their actions immediately, and take the necessary corrective steps more swiftly and with less permanent consequences than their engraving counterparts. Further, Cardano continues on the difficulty of accounting for reversal in a printed image: “When engraving [gems], the things to the right correspond and referred to the left, and the left to the right, which makes the work of engraving an entire image very difficult.”<sup>194</sup> Thus, the successful overcoming of these various obstacles set engraving apart from the other arts owing to the visualization necessary in the making of prints, even those after other carved material.

Only two of Adamo’s prints can be positively traced to known surviving gems, however, it seems probable that at least six further prints derive from drawings after gems, which can no longer be traced. All of the subjects of these eight prints are mythological and most feature a handful of figures that would have been appropriate as gem carvings, both owing to their small size (all measure less than 8 by 8 inches), shape of the plate (six are oval in shape, while two are rectangular), proximity of figures within the compositions, and the somewhat awkward heavy shading featured in most of the eight prints. None of these prints are dated and seem to form a cohesive series. It appears probable that all were based on drawings originally executed by Giulio Romano, copies of which most probably arrived in the hands of Adamo’s father, himself a gem collector.<sup>195</sup> Giovanni Battista in turn likely passed them on to his son, perhaps in the

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<sup>194</sup> *Subilité*, 320v, as cited in Melion, “Memorabilia”, 1115.

<sup>195</sup> It is not inconceivable that Adamo should have worked from plaster casts of gems, rather than drawings, but Adamo would still have needed to make intermediary drawings from which to engrave. Regarding Giovanni Battista’s own gem collection, see Rebecchini, *Private*, 264.

hope that they would hold commercial appeal as prints, given the demand with which Adamo's contemporaries collected impressions and reproductions of gems.<sup>196</sup>

The two prints that can be concretely associated with gems are *Three putti playing on a dolphin*, and the slaughter of a wild boar, commonly called an *Allegory of Autumn*.

[Figs. 35 and 36] Both of these prints were pulled from two sides of the same plate, which survives in the Calcografia Nazionale in Rome, suggesting that, as with so many of his plates, Adamo had the plate in Rome at the time of his death. It is possible that he engraved the plate in Rome, but it is equally likely that he executed the plate in Mantua, and then brought it, along with so many of his plates, to Rome. While the two prints are unusual in that they do not bear Adamo's monogram, common to many of his prints, scholarly consensus assigns them to Adamo's hand.<sup>197</sup> The print featuring the putti on the dolphins could derive from one of two gem sources, one of which survives in the Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg, or in the Museo Archeologico, Florence (Inv. No. 14467), originally from the Medici collection.<sup>198</sup> The location of the *Allegory of Autumn* gem is unknown, and may have been related additionally to a sculptural relief.<sup>199</sup>

However, both compositions feature in the print album by Battista Franco, called *Camei Antichi*, while the *Putti with Dolphins* also features in a print by Enea Vico.<sup>200</sup> Franco and Vico, newly free on the advice of Aretino, were hired in the 1560s to engrave the ancient

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<sup>196</sup> As has been observed by Francis Haskell and Nicholas Penny, "No court in Europe showed a greater interest in the acquisition not only of antiquities but of copies of antiquities than that of Mantua." *Taste and the Antique*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982): 2.

<sup>197</sup> Bellini, *Scultori*, 120-2 and 129-30; Massari, *Giulio*, 137 and 138-9.

<sup>198</sup> Toby Yuen identifies the gem as that in St Petersburg: "Giulio Romano, Giovanni da Udine and Raphael: Some Influences from the Minor Arts of Antiquity," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 42 (1979): 271. However, Anthony Radcliffe identifies the source as that in Florence, and draws the connection between Scultori's print and a pearwood box of the same subject and composition, on loan to the Victoria and Albert Museum, London: "Ricciarda," *The Burlington Magazine*, 124 (1982): 415.

<sup>199</sup> Bellini, *Scultori*, 129-30.

<sup>200</sup> For Battista Franco, see Anne Varick Lauder, *Battista Franco* (Milano: Officina Libraria, 2009); Fabrizio Biferali and Massimo Firpo, *Battista Franco, Pittore Viniziano Nella Cultura Artistica E Nella Vita Religiosa Del Cinquecento* (Pisa: Edizioni della Normale, 2007).

gems in the Grimani collection in Venice, with the eventual goal of publishing them.<sup>201</sup>

Indeed, Vico had become known for his work with ancient gems through his book, *Discorsi di M. Enea Vico parmigiano sopra le medaglie de gli antiche*, published in 1560.<sup>202</sup> However, the Grimani project never came to completion and instead the prints seem to have been issued in a less organized fashion.

The Grimani collection was amassed by Cardinal Marino Grimani (d. 1546), and upon his death, passed to his brother, Giovanni, the Patriarch of Aquileia in 1551.<sup>203</sup> The collection consisted of over 2,300 coins and medals, a considerable number of incised gemstones and 200 antique cameos. Vico and Franco separately but in duplicate reproduced 37 of the cameos, with Franco engraving a further eight.<sup>204</sup> Unless they were in competition, it is difficult to determine the benefit of duplicative engravings of gems. Franco died in 1561 and it is possible that Vico was brought on in order to complete the project.<sup>205</sup> However, this scenario does not adequately explain why Vico or Adamo made prints after the same gems. To engrave such a collection would have taken a great deal of time and its possible the project was abandoned because of this. Alternatively, perhaps it was decided that making casts after the gems rather than engravings was more efficient.

The way in which Adamo gained access to the gems is unknown, however, Bellini has posited that Giulio had prepared a drawing of the *Putti with dolphins* gem, perhaps in Rome, or possibly from a now lost plaquette made by the Paduan artist, Riccio

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<sup>201</sup> Marilyn Perry, "Wealth, Art and Display: The Grimani Cameos in Renaissance Venice," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 56 (1993): 270; see also E. Lemburg-Ruppelt, "Die berühmte Gemma Mantovana und die Antikensammlung Grimani in Venedig," *Xenia*, I, (1981): 85-108; O. J. Neverov, "Le serie dei 'Cammei e gemme antichi' di Enea Vico e I suoi modelli," *Prospettiva*, 37 (1984): 82-89.

<sup>202</sup> Five editions of this were published between 1555 and 1618 in various places, including that published by Gabriel Giolito de Ferrari in Venice in 1558.

<sup>203</sup> Perry, "Wealth," 270.

<sup>204</sup> Perry, "Wealth," 270.

<sup>205</sup> Johannes Myssok, "Battista Franco tra Biblioteca Marciana e Capella Grimani," *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz*, 54 (2010-12): 115.

(1470-1532).<sup>206</sup> Alternatively, it is possible that Adamo had access to the gem's composition via the engravings by Vico and Franco, but this seems less likely given the chronology and the differences between the three versions. [Figs. 37 and 38] Adamo's engraving of *Putti with Dolphins* is more like that by Franco: both are in reverse of the gem. However, Adamo's print includes further embellishments not included in the gem, or in either Vico or Franco's prints, including two reeds that frame the composition, and a series of fins, fierce eyebrows and sharp teeth on the two dolphins. Such embellishments were perhaps included because Adamo's print was freestanding, unlike that by Franco, whose print occupied a single page with engravings of five other gems. Further, such additions place the composition within Giulio's *modus operandi*, where he embellished antiquity so readily to achieve his final design, supporting the hypothesis that Adamo gained access to the composition via a now lost intermediate drawing by Giulio or one of his circle.

The second print by Adamo known to have been after an antique gem is the *Allegory of Autumn*. [Fig. 36] The subject is decidedly unusual: three men in loincloths work around a large cauldron. One tends to the fire, a second holds a knife to a wild boar, while a third holds a bowl over the boar, about to pour something over it. The background of the scene is made up with the same horizontal lines and hatches typical of Adamo's work at this time. It is identified as an *Allegory of Autumn*, given the activity depicted.<sup>207</sup> It differs significantly from most classical sacrificial scenes and is unlike many other carved gems in that these are simply slaves carrying out an everyday task. Battista Franco also recorded this gem in his book, placing it on the same page as three

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<sup>206</sup> Bellini, *Scultori*, 122.

<sup>207</sup> Bellini, *Scultori*, 129-30.



profiles and a nude staggering under the weight of a calf. [Fig. 39] The primary difference between the two prints is that Franco's features a man holding a vase over the boar, replacing the bowl in Adamo's version. As with the print on the other side of the plate, Adamo has embellished the scene, creating background, whereas Franco's print lacks the flames that lick the bottom of the cauldron in Adamo's print. The composition has been thought to derive from a now lost drawing by Giulio Romano, documenting a sculptural relief of a larger composition featuring a Bacchic orgy, in the Archaeological Museum, Naples (Inv. No. 6218).<sup>208</sup> However, the fact that the composition also appears in Franco's prints after antique cameos, suggests that the composition survived in more than one form, and it is equally possible that Giulio, or Adamo, gained access to the composition via the same cameo.

Six other prints by Adamo, all of which bear his monogram, also are likely derived from antique gems, although no such gems survive or are documented today. The subjects of these include *Aeneas with Anchises and Ascanius*, *Hercules and Iole* (?), *Two Putti in a chariot* and a *Nymph and Faun* (pulled from two sides of the same plate), *Two Putti riding on dolphins*, and *Lion biting the flank of a horse*. [Figs. 40-45] Each of these six prints is oval in shape, dated by scholars to Adamo's Mantuan period and conceivably could have been after carved gems, transmitted by drawings made by Giulio.

Certainly, the subject of the Aeneas print would have appealed to a Mantuan audience with its Virgilian connection. The print of *Two Putti in a chariot* derives from a drawing by Giulio's own hand or someone in his studio in the Biblioteca Reale in Turin (Inv. No. 15785), which has been thought by scholars to derive from an ancient gem.<sup>209</sup>

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<sup>208</sup> Bellini, *Scultori*, 130.

<sup>209</sup> Massari, *Giulio*, 124.

[Fig. 46] This print shares its plate with the *Nymph and Faun*, which is also thought to have been transmitted to Adamo via a now lost drawing by Giulio.<sup>210</sup> The composition of *Two Putti riding on dolphins* most likely also was transmitted to Adamo from a drawing by Giulio, now lost, executed in preparation for his design of the fresco of a lunette in the Camera delle Aquile, a room in which Giovanni Battista is known to have worked.<sup>211</sup>

[Fig. 47] Finally, the print, *Lion attacking the horse* has often been connected with the sculpture currently at the Capitoline Museum in Rome, and which sat from 1347 on the Capitoline.<sup>212</sup> [Fig. 48] Adamo's print follows the sculpture fairly closely: the differences result from the restoration carried out in 1594, when Ruggiero Bescapè added the head, neck and tail of the horse, as well as the back legs and tail of the lion.<sup>213</sup>

Because of the survival of some drawings and the similarities between the prints and some frescos in the Palazzo Te, it seems very likely that Giulio made drawings of such gems as inspiration for the decoration of the Palazzo Te. Indeed, the Grimani family used their collection of gems for the same purpose at the Palazzo Grimani in Santa Maria Formosa, Venice, decorated by Federico Zuccaro after Franco's death in 1561.<sup>214</sup> Alternatively, it is not inconceivable that the Gonzaga desired drawings of gems for their own collections. Isabella d'Este had a collection consisting of 46 carved gems.<sup>215</sup> In 1497, Isabella herself tried to acquire a group of cameos, which later entered into the very same Grimani collection, from the estate of Domenico di Piero, a jeweler and antiquarian

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<sup>210</sup> Bellini, *Scultori*, 56.

<sup>211</sup> Massari, *Giulio*, 129.

<sup>212</sup> Phyllis Pray Bober and Ruth Rubinstein, *Renaissance Artists & Antique Sculpture* (London: Harvey Miller Publishers, 1986): 219.

<sup>213</sup> Pray Bober, *Renaissance*, 219.

<sup>214</sup> Perry, "Wealth," 270.

<sup>215</sup> Clifford M. Brown, "Lo insaziabile desiderio nostro de cose antique: New Documents on Isabella D'Este's Collection of Antiquities," *Cultural Aspects of the Italian Renaissance*, ed. C. Clough (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1976): 331; John Boardman, *The Marlborough Gems formerly at Blenheim Palace, Oxfordshire*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009) 2.

in Venice. Yet, because of the ways in which Domenico dictated that his estate be sold (in large lots, rather than as individual lots), she was only able to afford to buy small figures and bronze heads, and was unable to acquire the cameos.<sup>216</sup> It seems very possible that in lieu of the real thing, she settled instead for drawings of some of the other gems, which made their way to Adamo (possibly in the form of copies).<sup>217</sup> Alternatively, perhaps Giulio made the drawings for his own use and these in turn came into the hands of the Scultori, via Giovanni Battista. Whatever the circumstances, Adamo's small prints, like those by Vico and Franco, would have been eminently collectable as a series among *literati* in Mantua and beyond.

### **Slave to the Market**

It seems that Adamo stayed and worked in Mantua until circa 1566, when he appears to have moved to Rome, described in one Roman notarial document of that year as “Adam de Scultoribus Mantuanus intagliator...”.<sup>218</sup> Without doubt, Adamo brought to Rome most of his engraved copper plates, given that so many of them survive in the Calcografia Nazionale in Rome. Soon after his arrival in Rome he married Aurelia Intelli.<sup>219</sup> Surviving documents reveal that he hired the printer Giacomo Gherardi to print an unknown number of engravings for him in the beginning of the 1570s.<sup>220</sup> While the maker of these prints remains unspecified, this important fragment suggest that he lacked a printing press of his own at this time. By 1573, he was partner to the most powerful

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<sup>216</sup> Perry, “Wealth,” 271-272.

<sup>217</sup> Correspondence and an inventory of 1542 suggest the contents of Isabella's collection, including her many gems. Brown, “Lo insaciabile,” 325.

<sup>218</sup> Bury, *Print*, 233.

<sup>219</sup> Witcombe, *Print Publishing in Sixteenth-Century Rome: Growth and Expansion, Rivalry and Murder* (London: Harvey Miller Publishers, 2008): 336.

<sup>220</sup> Tribunale, fol, 18recto: [Gherardi] “doi anni stati per servire con m.ro Bartolomeo del Cavalieri in Trastevere ho' puoi lavorato di quest'arte con m.o Adamo Scultore.” As cited in Witcombe, *Print*, 263, 282.

print publisher in Rome, evidenced by documents from 1576 that mark the dissolution of a publishing partnership between Adamo and the print magnate, Antonio Lafreri.<sup>221</sup> Despite this partnership, there are no surviving prints that bear his publisher's mark for this period. Did he simply publish his own work, and thus only use his monogram to suggest that he was both engraver and publisher, as his father seems to have done (but which, because such prints go undated cannot be ascribed specifically to this period)? Or, did he publish prints without including a publisher's mark? A final possibility is that he acted as a pseudo-silent partner, perhaps providing capital, or more convincingly, material goods, for Lafreri, who alone could use his name as publisher.<sup>222</sup> The documents from March and April 1576, which mark the dissolution of their partnership, offer a rare insight into the way in which Adamo worked, during this period, and possibly throughout his career.<sup>223</sup>

The reason for the dissolution of the partnership is not given in the surviving legal documents, however, the animosity between the two men is clear. Bearing in mind that Giovanni Battista died in October of 1575, and Diana appears to have been newly arrived in Rome, it is possible that Adamo wished to extricate himself from his partnership with Lafreri in order to strike out independently. In his initial proposal for the dissolution of the partnership, Adamo requests 800 scudi from Lafreri, along with a cut of the workshop items, which unfortunately remain unnamed, but which likely included plates, drawings,

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<sup>221</sup> Gian Ludovico Masetti Zannini, *Stampatori e librai a Roma nella seconda metà del cinquecento* (Rome: Fratelli Palombi, 1980): 212-214, 262-270; Gian Ludovico Masetti Zannini, "Rivalità e lavoro di incisori nelle botteghe Lafreri-Duchet e de la vacherie," *Collection de l'école Française de Rome: Les foundations nationales dans la Rome pontificale*, 52 (1981): 547-566.

<sup>222</sup> As Bury observes, it was not uncommon for "publishing partnerships to be formed between independent masters, in which they pooled resources and skills in order to reduce costs and risks." Such a partnership may not have precluded either partner to taking on independent work. Bury, *Print*, 10.

<sup>223</sup> Masetti Zannini, *Stampatori*, 212-4.

or other workshop paraphernalia.<sup>224</sup> In a later document, Adamo reduces the initial amount requested to 400 scudi, after Lafreri denied his original claim, stating that Adamo's request was unreasonable and unfair.<sup>225</sup> In order to contextualize this amount, it is interesting to consider that the son of Salamanca, a former partner of Lafreri, sold his father's share in the stock to the French publisher in 1562, after Salamanca's death for 1000 scudi, a third of their supposed value.<sup>226</sup> A resolution between Adamo and Lafreri was eventually reached by 12 April, 1576, but the exact terms of the dissolution of the partnership are unknown. It is clear, however, that Adamo wished to limit Lafreri's future printmaking activities as well as to ensure that he received his own materials back, whatever these might have been.

Unfortunately, the nature of the partnership is also largely unclear. Adamo is unlikely to have been hired by Lafreri as an engraver. As Bury has pointed out, it would seem that Adamo did not work in Lafreri's main premises on the via Parione, but at a different and unspecified location.<sup>227</sup> Lafreri himself is not thought to have had significant experience in engraving himself, the extent of his burin wielding has been largely assumed to extend no further than the occasional touching up of plates, however, he hired the very best engravers in Rome to carry out his commissions, buying the plates so that he could control the print runs.<sup>228</sup> In order for Lafreri to consider forming a partnership with Adamo, recently arrived from his hometown to the vastly more competitive and commercial environment of Rome, the Mantuan must have had

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<sup>224</sup> A good painter could make around 1000 scudi per year, while a gentleman might live comfortably for 4000 scudi per year. (Richard E. Spear, "Scrambling for Scudi: Notes on Painters' Earnings in Early Baroque Rome," *The Art Bulletin*, 85 (2003), 312, 314.

<sup>225</sup> Masetti Zannini, *Stampatori*, 213 and 269.

<sup>226</sup> David Woodward, *Maps as Prints in the Italian Renaissance* (London: British Library, 1996): 43.

<sup>227</sup> Bury, *Print*, 116.

<sup>228</sup> Peter Parshall, "Antonio Lafreri's *Speculum Romanae Magnificentiae*," *Print Quarterly*, 23 (2006): 4.

something significant to offer. It also seems unlikely that Adamo brought a large sum of money to the partnership. Giovanni Battista did not die until 1575, two years into the partnership, and rather than being an impetus for Adamo to form the partnership, instead may have been the reason that Adamo sought to dissolve it. What else, beyond money, could he have contributed?

Here the claims by Adamo that Lafreri should cease producing prints associated with their partnership may prove insightful. As far as is known, prior to this point, Adamo had never used a publishing insignia, signing a print only when he himself was the engraver, and instead suggesting that the partnership produced prints using only Lafreri's publishers mark, typically "Antonio Lafreri Exc[udebat] Romae," or some such variation. In fact, there are relatively few new prints published by Lafreri (and presumably Adamo) that are datable to circa 1573 and 1576. This comparative absence of new prints suggests the partnership was primarily interested in re-issuing old prints, rather than promoting newly cut engravings.

After 1573, perhaps at the prompting of his new partner, Lafreri introduced an engraved title-page by Etienne Duperac for his *Speculum Romanae Magnificentiae* series, a significant selection of prints of ancient and modern Rome, from which print collectors could create an individual selection of prints, many of which seem to have been bound into a personalized album.<sup>229</sup> However, it is important to note that while the title page

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<sup>229</sup> For the *Speculum Romanae Magnificentiae*, see Parshall, "Speculum," 23 (2006): 3-27; H. Hunt [Letwin], "The Duke of Savoy's *Speculum Romanae Magnificentiae* in Norfolk," *Print Quarterly*, 25 (2008): 180; Zorach, *Virtual*. See also the earlier publications devoted to the subject: F. Ehrle, *Roma Prima di Sisto V: la pianta di Roma du Pérac-Lafréry del 1557*, (Rome: Danesi. 1908); C. Huelson, "Das Speculum Romanae Magnificentiae des Antonio Lafreri," *Collectanea variae doctrinae Leoni S. Olschki bibliopolae Florentino* (Munich: J. Rosenthal, 1921): 121-70; L. R. McGinniss, *Catalogue of the Earl of Crawford's "Speculum Romanae Magnificentiae" now in the Avery Architectural Library* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1974); *The Speculum Romanae Magnificentiae of Antonio Lafreri*, Sales Catalogue Bernard Quaritch, London, 1925?; B. Lowry, "Notes on the *Speculum Romanae Magnificentia*

may have been released as early as 1573, as is often assumed, there is no reason to believe that “it was made any earlier than shortly before he ceased issuing prints in the year he died.”<sup>230</sup> An inventory of Lafreri’s plates was executed in 1573, today one of the most important inventories of prints to survive, which was quite possibly drawn up to mark the beginning of the partnership between the two men.<sup>231</sup>

Three new prints that are definitively datable to this period of Lafreri’s business are attributed to Etienne Duperac, in addition to his *Speculum* title page, including the *Seven Churches of Rome*, a view of the *Fountain at the Villa d’Este at Tivoli*, and a reconstructed view of the *Mausoleum of Augustus* in Rome, all dated and produced in 1575, most probably for the Roman Jubilee and all typically included in Lafreri’s *Speculum* series. A further three new prints, datable to this period, are by Cornelis Cort, a contemporary of Adamo and Giorgio Ghisi, after an antique sculpture of a male warrior, dated 1574, as well as his *Spinario*, after that at the Capitoline Museum, Rome. These two prints are also typically included in the *Speculum* series. Cort’s third new print from this period was his print after Raphael’s *Transfiguration*, dated 1573. There are a few more prints that bear Lafreri’s mark from this period, but which lack an engraver’s mark, such as *The Archers* after a drawing by Michelangelo, the figure of Jeremiah from the Sistine ceiling, which is undated, a *Resurrection of Christ*, after a drawing by Giulio Romano now in the Louvre, dated 1575, and finally a new print dated 1575 that reproduces Rosso Fiorentino’s *Mars and Venus*. [Fig. 49-52] The print after

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and related publications,” *Art Bulletin*, 34 (1952): 46-50; S. Bianchi, “Note allo *Speculum Romanae Magnificentiae* di Antonio Lafreri,” *Grafica d’Arte*, 4 (1995): 3-8; S. Corsi and P. Ragionieri, *Speculum Romanae Magnificentiae: Roma nell’incisione del Cinquecento* (Florence: Mandragora, 2004).

<sup>230</sup> Parshall, “Speculum,” 23.

<sup>231</sup> The stocklist survives as a unique publication in the Biblioteca Marucelliana, Florence, and which has been reproduced by F. Ehrle, in his *Roma prima di Sisto V: La pianta di Roma Di Perac-Lafreri del 1577*, (Vatican City: Danesi, 1908): 14.

Michelangelo's *Archers*, a drawing that was originally made for Tommaso de'Cavalieri and which has its initial source in a stucco from the House of Nero, features significant changes after the master's drawing.<sup>232</sup> From the above list, the middle two prints might join Adamo's corpus, or at the least, were made from his cache of drawings. The Jeremiah print may well represent one of his many prints after Michelangelo's designs, including his reproductions of the Sistine ceiling discussed above. In fact, both Ghisi and Adamo made prints after Michelangelo's Jeremiah, however neither are exactly the same as this 1573 print. However, at the least, the existence of their prints suggests that a drawing after the prophet was in their possession. The *Resurrection*, after a drawing by Giulio Romano, also could have come from a collection of drawings owned by Adamo, and brought from Mantua. The engraving style of these two prints is similar to that of Adamo. Additionally, the *Resurrection* is very close to an illustration engraved by Adamo for a book in 1573.<sup>233</sup>

The drawings on which all of Adamo's prints are based, especially those after Michelangelo, were likely extremely valuable, given their detailed execution, breadth of subject, and source, in the case of those drawings after Giulio's own hand, and it is these

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<sup>232</sup> Bernadine Barnes, *Michelangelo in Print: Reproductions as Response in the Sixteenth Century* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010): 66-7.

<sup>233</sup> *Rosario della Sacratissima Vergine Maria*, by Luis de Granada, published in Rome by Giuseppe de gli Angeli, for which Adamo provided the title page, signed "Adam Sculptor Mantuanus Incidit Romae MDLXXIII CON LICENCIA DE SUPERIORI," along with 14 full-page illustrations. The book is dedicated to the "Rev. Padre Maestro Generale di tutto l'ordine de predicatori, P. Fra. Serafino Cavalli da Brescia". The Rev. Padre Maestro "had obtained from Pope Gregory XIII the institution of the feast day of the Rosary—a rite founded, according to tradition, by St Dominic—on the recurrence of the date of the Christian victory over the Turks at Lepanto." Valeria Pagani, "Review," 78. In addition to the title page, there are a further twenty full-page illustrations, of which fourteen were likely to have been engraved by Adamo. The remaining six are most certainly executed by Cornelis Cort, with whom Adamo worked during the same period as Lafreri's partner, and these plates appear to have been re-used from a previous project, as they are cracked and worn in places in all surviving impressions. Pagani, "Review," 78. A second edition of the *Rosario* text was released in Venice in 1574 by Pietro de'Franceschi in octavo format, however, the illustrations had been executed by a different artist, in woodcut, and appear to be much more simple in composition than those by Adamo. Adamo's design for the frontispiece was copied in a number of sixteenth-century books. Pagani, "Review," 78.



along with the many plates transported from Mantua, that may have been the valuable contribution that Adamo brought to his partnership with Lafreri. If indeed the fire of 1550 related to the Scultori, some such material may have perished in the conflagration, but, it is possible that certain materials were spared because they were stored elsewhere, or perhaps survived in the form of copies. Alternatively, Adamo may only have held material that was created after the fire of 1550.

Also produced at some point circa 1573 and published by Lafreri are two prints by Cherubino Alberti, an associate of Adamo's, after Michelangelo's *Ignudi*, most probably based on the drawings owned by Adamo and which formed the basis for his own prints after the Sistine ceiling. Alberti's prints are far more accomplished than those by Adamo, as well as being more loyal to the surviving model drawings in the Royal Collection.<sup>234</sup> One of these two *Ignudi* is dated 1573, strongly supporting the conclusion that these too resulted from the partnership of Adamo and Lafreri.

It should also be noted that Adamo's sister, Diana, and close associate, Giorgio Ghisi, both published prints with Lafreri during Adamo's partnership with the publisher. In total, Lafreri published 23 of Ghisi's prints, some of which were produced prior to 1573, as evidenced by the stock list of Lafreri's workshop. These prints that appear to post-date the stock list, and which one could propose were published during the Adamo/Lafreri partnership are as follows: Giorgio Ghisi's prints of *Angelica and Medoro*, after a painting by Teodoro, Ghisi's brother; as well as his *Vision of Ezekiel*, after a design by Giovanni Battista Bertani of Mantua for a fresco thought to have been in S. Paola in Mantua, the final resting place for many of the Gonzaga family; his *Fall of Troy*, made originally in the 1540s by Giorgio Ghisi after Giovanni Battista Scultori; the

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<sup>234</sup> See note 189 above.

series of twelve prints after the ceiling at the Galerie d'Ulysse at Fontainebleau, after Primaticcio, made originally in the 1560s; his *Caius Marius in Prison*, after a lost Roman building façade by Polidoro da Caravaggio; his *Mystic Marriage of St Catherine*, after Correggio, dated 1575; his *Madonna of Loreto* after Raphael, dated 1575; and a print after Federico Zuccaro's *Coronation of the Virgin*, dated 1575. While some of the artists who created the source material for these prints had ties to Rome, many of these prints are by or after artists who also had personal ties to Mantua and Giulio, supporting the possibility that Adamo brought the plates, or at least the drawings on which the prints are based, with him from his hometown. Each of these prints, despite any initial dates that they might bear, were published by Lafreri in a secondary state, during the period of Adamo and Lafreri's partnership, that is, between 1573 and 1576.<sup>235</sup> It is clear from a letter dated 12 May, 1581 that Ghisi may have been experiencing some financial strain, for he thanks Duke Vincenzo Gonzaga for erasing a debt of 200 scudi.<sup>236</sup> Surely a remedy to this and other such debts in the previous decade would be to transfer his precious plates to Lafreri in the years before, a transaction likely facilitated by Ghisi's boyhood companion, Adamo.

Adamo's sister, Diana, also published five prints with Lafreri, again, most probably during his partnership with Adamo. These include *Marcus Atilius Regulus in a Barrell*, the second state of *The Martyrdom of St Catherine*, *The Archangels Michael, Gabriel and Raphael Adoring the Madonna and Child*, the second state of *Hercules with the Golden Apples of the Hesperides*, and *The Death*, after Marcantonio Raimondi. None of these prints appear in the abovementioned 1573 stock list by Lafreri, and thus

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<sup>235</sup> Bury, *Print*, 33-34.

<sup>236</sup> Boorsch, *Ghisi*, 228.

must have entered his workshop after it was completed, most likely coming with Adamo's partnership.

After Lafreri's death in 1577, his workshop was rife with conflict, reflected in another series of surviving documents, which show that the various parties were involved in an "uncivil disagreement resolved only after accusations of theft, various imprisonments and a dead body washed up on the banks of a Tiber."<sup>237</sup> On 8 February, 1582, Adamo appeared as a witness in a court case brought by fellow publishers, Claudio Duchetti (Lafreri's primary heir) and Paolo Graziano, where he was implicated as a conspirator against Lafreri's heirs.<sup>238</sup> Adamo, along with other rival publishers, including Lorenzo Vaccari, Mario Cartaro and Giulio Salamanca, was suspected of plotting the murder of Gerolamo Modenese five years earlier in 1577, who had been working as an engraver in Lafreri's workshop at the time of his murder.<sup>239</sup> Murder was not the only crime thought to have been committed indirectly against the Lafreri heirs: the issue of counterfeited prints was also a complaint discussed during the trial. However, according to Vaccari's testimony, Lafreri himself "counterfeited all the new prints of us other publishers, because that was the sort of man he was and was more like that than anyone else."<sup>240</sup> If this were true, then one should wonder why Lafreri would bother with entering into a partnership with Adamo. The powerful incentive would have been Adamo's large cache of plates engraved by him and his Mantuan colleagues and the

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<sup>237</sup> Parshall, "Speculum," 22; Masetti Zanini, *Collection*, 547-53.

<sup>238</sup> Witcombe, *Print*, 295.

<sup>239</sup> Tribunale, fol. 54 recto, "[Donato] li haveva detto Claudio credo io, e ci haveva nominato una chiama m.ro Adamo, Mario Cartare e parecchij altri." As cited in Witcombe, *Print*, 295.

<sup>240</sup> Tribunale, fol. 58 verso: "[Vaccari] m.o Antonio che contrafacere tutte le stampe nuove de noi altri botegari perche era un huomo cosi fatto et havea più il modo di noi altri." As cited in Witcombe, *Print*, 296.

drawings that he seems to have possessed by Giulio's hand and studio, as well as those after Michelangelo.

While Adamo does not appear to have been formally accused in the above case, his suspected involvement reveals that his relationship with Lafreri's heirs was anything but amicable.<sup>241</sup> As in death, so in life: if Lafreri's workshop was involved in such a level of infighting and intrigue, then perhaps his workshop was not so different when he was alive. Adamo, who likely worked largely independently prior to entering into this partnership with Lafreri, may have desired to extricate himself from such an environment. Additionally, with Giovanni Battista's death, Adamo may have received an inheritance that enabled him further independence.

After the dissolution of their partnership, it seems that Adamo continued to work as a print publisher. In 1576, four prints were published by Adamo, bearing only his imprimature: "Adam Sculptor Mantuanus exc. Romae Anno D[omi]ni 1577." All four of these prints are unsigned, and feature religious subjects: a Crucifixion, a Madonna del Pilar di Saragozza, S. Eulalia and San Francesco di Paola.<sup>242</sup> While Adamo appears to have needed to hire a printer in the early part of the 1570s, as discussed above, it would seem that he had acquired a printing press by the end of the decade, either through the dissolution of his partnership with Lafreri or the death of his father, allowing him to issue the above prints with his own imprimatur.

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<sup>241</sup> Vaccari testifies that Marelli, the primary suspect, and Mario Labacco, had drawn a picture of Adamo hanging by his feet on a wall of an inn at Tivoli. Witcombe, *Print*, 300.

<sup>242</sup> Witcombe, *Print*, 263.

## A Lifetime of Slavery

Adamo continued as a publisher as late as 1584, and died at the age of about 57 in 1587.<sup>243</sup> His death was communicated to Mantua in a letter from Attilio Malegnani, a Gonzaga agent, to the Duke of Mantua on 27 May, saying that Adamo had died “six days earlier.”<sup>244</sup> His widow married the printmaker and publisher, Cristoforo Blanco, who was originally from Lorraine in circa 1593, and who had acquired a number of Adamo’s plates as part of his wife’s dowry.<sup>245</sup> Of the 97 of Adamo’s prints that appear to date to his Mantuan periods (including the 71 plates from the Sistine series after Michelangelo), at least 90 were carried to Rome and are now in the Calcografia Nazionale, along with a further three from his Roman period. Five of his prints, in addition to the Sistine series, bear the later publisher’s mark of Giovanni Jacomo de Rossi (whose holdings eventually became the Calcografia Nazionale), who re-issued them in Rome from circa 1640.<sup>246</sup> These included two of Adamo’s most important Roman prints: his *Allegory of Servitude* and his *Nativity with Four Saints*.

Very tellingly, none of his own prints appear to have been published by Lafreri’s heirs, suggesting that he likely received his own plates back after the dissolution of the partnership in 1576. Even more importantly, Ghisi’s plates also appear to have been returned to Adamo, given that one, his *Vision of Ezekiel*, which bears Lafreri’s mark in the third state, was published by Blanco, the second husband to Adamo’s widow, in its fourth state. These publishers’ marks indicate that the plate for the *Vision of Ezekiel* and

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<sup>243</sup> Bellini, *Scultori*, 29.

<sup>244</sup> ASMn, AG, Corrispondenza da Roma, b. 947.

<sup>245</sup> The document is reproduced in Antonino Bertolottii, *Artisti Francesi in Roma* (Mantua: G. Mondovi, 1886): 94-6. Witcombe, *Print*, 336; Pagani, “Review,” 72; Bellini, *Scultori*, 64.

<sup>246</sup> Michael Bury, “Review of the *Indice delle stampe de’ Rossi*,” *Burlington Magazine*, 140 (1998): 489-490; On the de Rossi, see Consagra, “de Rossi”; Anna Grelle Iusco, ed. *Indice delle stampe intagliate in rame a bulino, e in acqua forte esistenti nella stamparia di Lorenzo Filippo de’ Rossi Appresso Santa Maria della Pace in Roma, 1735* (Rome: Artemide: 1996); Boorsch, “Vincenzo,” 51-57.

likely Ghisi's other plates previously in Adamo's care, were not only restored to Adamo in 1576, but retained by him and passed on to his wife upon his death. The path that these plates appear to have taken seems to support conclusively the suggestion that Adamo contributed plates and drawings to his partnership with Lafreri.

Adamo's technical skill in engraving was surpassed by his father, his sister and the colleague of his youth, Giorgio. While Bartsch praised the workmanship of Giovanni Battista, he criticized Adamo's burin work as "neither tight nor fine," saying nothing much more on the subject.<sup>247</sup> Vasari too, largely glossed over Adamo's prints, choosing instead to heap his praise on Ghisi and Diana.<sup>248</sup> Yet, Adamo seems to have possessed a certain business acumen that allowed him to work with some success as a publisher, partnering with the most important publisher in Italy at this time. Even the subjects of his prints reveal this business acumen: he produced much of his corpus as sets of prints (the Sistine and Gem sets, for example), a cunning marketing strategy. It is very telling that, even in Rome, he continued to follow the same model of essentially self-publishing that his father had established in his workshop in Mantua.

Regardless of whether he had the creative aptitude to alter the compositions from which he was working, Adamo's complete lack of invented compositions within his prints attest to his apparent indifference for demonstrating his *ingegno*. Adamo's close contemporary, Giorgio Ghisi sought ways to instill his "reproductive" prints with countless creative interventions, the subject of the next chapter of this dissertation. However, Adamo copied his sources closely, rarely if ever adding his own creative

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<sup>247</sup> Adam von Bartsch, *Les Graveurs de l'école de Marc-Antoine Raimondi*, 15 (Vienna: J. V. Degan, 1813): 374.

<sup>248</sup> For example, although unidentified, it was likely Adamo's prints after Michelangelo's figures in the Sistine chapel, which Vasari disparaged in his 1568 edition of his *Vite*. Wisch, "Vested," 167. Vasari, *Opere*, 632.

contributions. Where Ghisi's prints were listed in inventories according to his name, Adamo's prints, and those by many other printmakers, went unnamed.<sup>249</sup> As with his *Allegory of Servitude*, made after a figure designed by none other than Mantegna, the primary artistic interest of Adamo's prints was not that *he* engraved them, but rather the subjects themselves. The number of editions of Adamo's Sistine figures, and so many of his other prints, testifies to their significant popularity: they appear to have been collected and consulted by a number of artists. A drawing after Michelangelo's Ruth in an album of drawings that belonged to Nicolo Pio, now preserved in the Gabinetto dei Disegni, Rome, is almost certainly taken from Adamo's engraving.<sup>250</sup> Adamo's printmaking strategy, that is, essentially removing himself from the process, appears to have been a commercial success. While Adamo largely seems to have escaped the fate of being an "enslaved" court artist, his slavery was of a different sort: he worked as a slave to the reputation of more famous artists.

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<sup>249</sup> According to an inventory of sale from Stefano Duchetti in 1581, "3 prints by Giorgio Mantovano" is listed among prints by unnamed artists. Pagani, "Dispersal 1," 16.

<sup>250</sup> Simonetta Prosperi Valenti Rodino, "Drawings from the Collection of Nicola Pio in Rome," *Master Drawings*, 21 (1983): 142.

### **Chapter 3: Pictorial Re-Animation: Giorgio Ghisi's Engravings Brought to Life**

One of the prints published by Adamo's heirs was Ghisi's *Vision of Ezekiel*, originally released in 1554, made when Ghisi appears to have been living and working in Antwerp. [Fig. 53] Measuring 16.4 by 26.8 inches, it has two inscriptions, which read "Georgius de Ghisi Mantuan[us]. F[ecit]. MDLIII.." and "Io Baptisto Britano Mantuan[us] In.", suggesting that it was made by Ghisi after a design made by Giovanni Battista Bertani. Bertani was the Gonzaga master of work back in Mantua, and an apparent close friend of Ghisi's.<sup>251</sup> The *Vision of Ezekiel* is one of three prints made by Ghisi after Bertani in this period.<sup>252</sup> As with so many of Ghisi's engravings, the extent to which he followed Bertani's model is unknown, as no known design drawings for this print survive. At the very least, it is possible to suggest that Ghisi was interested in and engaged with its sophisticated content. Despite "reproducing" the work of another artist, this engraving falls neatly into a category of prints made by Ghisi that deal, some more broadly than others, with the theme of "re-animation." It would seem that Ghisi returned to this theme repeatedly throughout his long printmaking career, exploring the theme most literally in his *Vision of Ezekiel*. Through this and other prints that explore the theme, Ghisi is asserting the artist's role in the process of "re-animation," suggesting, somewhat hubristically, that the action is not for God alone.

The scene is set in a graveyard, framed to the left by a tower of large stone blocks, likely representative of the corner of a mausoleum. The focus of the print is a series of gravestones and monuments, from which skeletons and bodies of various decomposed

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<sup>251</sup> Boorsch, *Ghisi*, 15; For recent work on Bertani, see Guido Rebecchini, "Giovanni Battista Bertani: l'inventario dei beni," *Annali di architettura*, 12 (2000): 69-75.

<sup>252</sup> For previous discussions of the *Vision of Ezekiel*, see Boorsch, *Ghisi*, 75-77; see also Belluzzi, *Giulio Romano*, 568-9.



states emerge. Some skeletons and bodies are animated, while others lie motionless on the ground. Above the graveyard a band of five cherubs hold aloft a banderole on which is written a verse taken from Ezekiel, Chapter 37, verse 6, reading: “I will lay sinews and skin upon you.”<sup>253</sup> In the background, the scene is overshadowed by dark rock formations, possibly intended to represent mountains. In the upper left and right corners, white clouds billow, framing especially the two stone monuments, and anamorphically appearing not unlike muscles themselves. Scant vegetation grows on the rocky ground, a seemingly good variety for less than fertile ground.

This is Ghisi’s version of Ezekiel’s vision of the resurrection of the dead, when God re-animates those destined for heaven, re-clothing them in their skins and making them whole once again. The various stages of decomposition reflect the length of time since the figures died. However, while this print illustrates a great moment of God’s potential greatness, it also celebrates the miraculous power that artists, such as Ghisi hold. Through the making of his print, Ghisi is also re-animating these lucky souls. His assertion is made not only in his demonstration of skeletal anatomy, but also in his visual exploration of the implications of such a process, picturing individuals at seemingly every stage, creating a tension of contrasts. The initial contrast in the print celebrates the difference between the action of God and that of the engraver: while God lays *on* sinew over the figure, the engraver excavates down *into* the copper plate to create the form.

The two skeletons at the centre, a visual reference perhaps to the *danse macabre*, communicate their jubilation in the moment, embracing and holding their arms aloft in victory. To the right, a second pair is draped over a gravestone, with the left figure appearing with just his muscle, no skin, and no hair, while his companion appears at least

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<sup>253</sup> “Dabo Super vos ner vos et succrescere facia sup vos carne.”

to have skin and hair. To the left, multiple people are coming out of an underground chamber: two skeletons and a figure who appears to have skin and hair. Next to these people, stand three more figures around another gravestone. This grouping could be taken as a modified version of the three stages of man, here shown as the three stages of decay: the left person appears to be an old man, possibly flayed, while at the centre, the man appears to be totally whole and bearded, representative of a man of middle age, while to his right is a skeleton with long hair, bereft of muscle and skin. This array of various skeletal, muscled and whole forms is impressive and demonstrates Ghisi's mastery of engraving the human body and anatomy.<sup>254</sup>

The exercise of contrast between the skeletal and whole forms, however, could extend also to the other figures within the print. The *Vision of Ezekiel* is populated not only by the cherubs, full of life, but also three beautiful caryatids, hewn from stone, who support the stone monument as if it were feather light. While there does not appear to be any women among the rejuvenated, excepting perhaps the figure with long hair, these women are fair, voluptuous, and in two cases, even with visible nipples. The sharp angularity of the bones and rawness of the sinew is so directly contrasted here by these plump, soft women, one might be forgiven for forgetting they are meant to be made from stone. Ghisi encourages his viewer to consider the material from which these women are made, reminding the viewer that they too were animated by an artist, brought to life from stone quarried from the mountains like those in the background of the scene.

Significantly, this tomb with caryatids appears to have been inspired by the tomb for Pietro Strozzi, designed by Giulio Romano and sculpted by Bernardo Germani, with

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<sup>254</sup> Boorsch, *Ghisi*, 77.

the possible assistance of Giovanni Battista, between 1529-1533.<sup>255</sup> The tomb still stands in the church of St Andrea, Mantua. If indeed Giovanni Battista assisted in the execution of Strozzi's tomb, then Ghisi is re-animating the sculptural work of his teacher. [Fig. 54] Just as a sculptor, perhaps Giovanni Battista himself, helped to excavate these figures from stone and tame the natural material and form, so too did Ghisi sculpt these figures from copper in the printmaking process. The use of a verse that is phrased in the first person, "I will lay sinews..." represents not only the voice of God, but also that of Ghisi. The putti who hold aloft the banderole perform not only God's work, but ultimately work in the service of the artist as well. The way in which the artist plays a prominent role within this tableau would appear to be entirely intentional. Ghisi and Bertani appear to be asserting themselves, like God, as creators, re-animators even, within the artistic process.

It is difficult to know with certainty where the print was intended for publication. It has been suggested that Lafreri published Ghisi's print shortly after its creation, however, while it appears that the Roman publisher did release the print in its third state, there is no date indicated on the third state, and it would appear more convincing that the print was published by Lafreri much later, during his partnership with Adamo Scultori in the 1573-6, as discussed in the previous chapter.<sup>256</sup> From 1551, Ghisi had been living and working in Antwerp, enticed there possibly by the printmaker and publisher Hieronymous Cock, whom he likely met previously in Rome.<sup>257</sup> He was listed as a

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<sup>255</sup> Boorsch, *Ghisi*, 77; Bellini, *Ghisi*, 112-114. On the tomb and Pietro Stozzi, see Rebecchini, "Scultore," 65-79.

<sup>256</sup> The Lewis's recommend that Lafreri published the print quite soon after it was completed. They reason that it came to the publisher swiftly as there is only one surviving impression of the engraving in its finished state, but without a publisher's address. Boorsch, *Ghisi*, 76.

<sup>257</sup> For Cock, see Caroline Karpinski, "At the Sign of the Four Winds," *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, 18 (1959): 8-17; Timothy Riggs, "Hieronymus Cock: printmaker and publisher in Antwerp at the sign of the Four winds," PhD Dissertation (Yale University, 1972); Joris van Grieken et. al., Eds. *Hieronymus Cock: The Renaissance in Print* (Brussels: Mercatorfonds, 2013); Christopher Heuer,

member of the Antwerp Guild of St Luke: “Joorge Mantewaen, coperen plaetsnyder,” almost certainly Giorgio Ghisi.<sup>258</sup> In 1551, Cock published the first of five prints made by Ghisi, his *Last Supper*, after Lambert Lombard. [Fig. 55] This print was Ghisi’s only print after a Flemish artist. Unusually for Ghisi, it was dedicated to Cardinal Granvelle, the close advisor of Charles V and protector of Cock. The other four prints published by Cock during this period were each after Italian artists: *The School of Athens* and *Disputa* after Raphael, *The Nativity* after Bronzino, and *The Judgment of Paris*, also after Bertani. [Figs. 56-59]

It is odd then that Cock should not have published *The Vision of Ezekiel*, which is dated in the inscription to this period and which matches these other prints stylistically. While unlikely, it is possible that Ghisi did in fact release the print under Cock and this is simply not noted on the print. Alternatively, perhaps Cock refused the print and/or Ghisi sought to release it elsewhere. If Cock had refused the print, it is possible that he was made uncomfortable by the artistic hubris expressed in this particular print. Bertani was tried for heresy by the Inquisition in Mantua less than a decade after the making of this print and imprisoned in 1567-8 for several months.<sup>259</sup> Cardinal Ercole Gonzaga, Bertani’s early protector, had died in 1563, leaving the artist vulnerable to the Inquisition despite his artistic status in the city.<sup>260</sup>

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“Hieronymus Cock’s Aesthetic of Collapse,” *Oxford Art Journal*, 36 (2013): 387-408; Jacqueline Burgers, *In De Vier Winden: De Prentuitgeverij Van Hieronymus Cock 1507/10-1570 Te Antwerpen : Uit De Collectie Tekeningen En Prenten* (Rotterdam: Museum Boymans-Van Beuningen, 1988).

<sup>258</sup> Piero Bianconi, *L’opera completa di Bruegel*, (Milan: Rizzoli, 1967): 84.

<sup>259</sup> Boorsch, *Ghisi*, 77, n. 3; Giovanni Paccagnini, et al. *Mantova: Le Arti*, III (Mantua: Istituto Carlo d’Arco per la storia di Mantova, 1960): 11-12.

<sup>260</sup> Rebecchini, *Private*, 223, n. 56. For an account of the Inquisition in Mantua at this time, see Sergio M. Pagano, *Il Processo Di Endimio Calandra e L’inquisizione a Mantova Nel 1567-1568*. (Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1991); See also: Guido Rebecchini, “Giovanni Battista Bertani: l’inventario dei beni,” *Annali di architettura*, 12 (2000): 71 (69-75).

Despite whatever artistic assertions are made in the print, it appears to have held interest in later decades: it was published by Antonio Lafreri, most probably at the time of Adamo Scultori's partnership from 1573-6. In support of this, the print was subsequently published by Scultori's widow's second husband, Cristoforo Blanco, suggesting that Scultori retained the plate at the time of the dissolution of the partnership. If indeed the print was seen as being heretical in any way, it appears to have lost its potency by the time Lafrery and Blanco published it in Rome. Ultimately, the purpose of the print is to celebrate the power of re-animation held by artists such as Ghisi and Bertani, while ostensibly illustrating a joyous biblical event.

### **An Itinerant Artist**

While much about Ghisi's life can be gleaned from his prints, contemporary accounts and correspondence, his exact movements during his life can be difficult to confirm, as he travelled around Europe fairly regularly, living at various times in Paris, Rome, and Antwerp. Given his itinerant career and his omission of dates on many of his prints, the chronology of his corpus and movements can be, at times, unclear. However, despite these dating issues, the complete corpus by Ghisi has already been catalogued both in the Metropolitan Museum Exhibition Catalogue from the monographic exhibition in 1985, by Suzanne Boorsch, with Michal and R. E. Lewis, and more recently, by Paolo Bellini in his catalogue, *L'opera incisa di Giorgio Ghisi* in 1998. Both catalogues admirably construct a chronology for Ghisi's prints, which occasionally conflict each other, and link the source material with the engravings. Not to be forgotten is d'Arco's

early work on Ghisi.<sup>261</sup> Careful work has already been done on individual prints made by Ghisi.<sup>262</sup>

Until this point, most scholars appear to have concluded that Ghisi's printmaking was less an opportunity to create than an exercise in reproduction. In his review of the 1985 catalogue devoted to Giorgio Ghisi, David Landau observed that, mid-career, Ghisi "stopped growing and remained a highly skilled but unimaginative reproductive engraver."<sup>263</sup> In an analysis of a selection of Ghisi's prints, this chapter will seek to identify Ghisi's creativity in the making of these highly sophisticated prints. His own contributions, rare inventions, and choice of subject matter reflect his consideration of the role of the artist as the "animator" of art.

Growing up in the ambit of Giulio Romano, the ultimate court artist of the era, and perhaps witnessing the difficulty with which Giovanni Battista Scultori sought salaried work, Ghisi was likely desirous, not unlike many of his peers and probably from an early age, of a secure opportunity. With the death of Isabella d'Este in 1539, Federico Gonzaga in 1540 and Giulio Romano in 1546, Mantua was a changed place by the time Ghisi had reached his prime. At some point between 1544 and 1546, Ghisi appears to have moved to Rome, having been trained as an engraver by Giovanni Battista and eager

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<sup>261</sup> d'Arco, *Cinque*, 39-53 and 97-116.

<sup>262</sup> For example, on Ghisi's prints after Michelangelo, and on individual prints, such as Michael Bury's work of the print after Bronzino's *Nativity* and Raphael's *School of Athens*, see Bury, "Engravings," 4-19; Gioconda Albricci, "Il Sogno di Raffaello," *Arte Cristiana*, 71 (1983): n. 697, 215-222; Bellini, *Ghisi*, 180-191; Stefania Massari, *Incisori Mantovani del '500: Giovan Battista, Adamo, Diana Scultori e Giorgio Ghisi* (Rome: Fratelli Palombi, 1980): 166-180; Penny Roberts and Peter Davidson, "Valois monarchy and visual propaganda: a suggested reading of Giorgio Ghisi's Dream of Raphael or Allegory of Life," *Emblematica*, 10 (2000): 415-422; Claudio Salsi, "Nuove scoperte per l'Allegoria della vita umana di Giorgio Ghisi," *Grafica d'arte*, 13 (2002): 4-14; Luigi Toccaceli, *L'allegoria della vita umana di Giorgio Ghisi: la percezione e la letteratura del segno esemplificati in un'opera*. (Milano: Silvana Editoriale, 2005); Peter Tomory, "Giorgio Ghisi's Dream of Raphael or the Melancholy of Michelangelo," *Storia dell'arte*, 75 (1992): 165-175.

<sup>263</sup> David Landau, "Review of *The Engravings of Giorgio Ghisi*," *Burlington Magazine*, 128 (1986): 41.

to make a name for himself.<sup>264</sup> Ghisi made the trip in the company of Bertani, Giulio Romano's successor from 1549 as the Gonzaga Master of Work. Bertani records the trip, recalling seeing the splendors of the Eternal City with Ghisi and noting his remarkable skill in damascened art.<sup>265</sup>

After his time in Antwerp and collaborations with Cock, by 1554/55, Ghisi appears to have been on the move once again, this time to France, while still maintaining ties with Mantua. Dated to this period is a remarkable damascened parade shield, now in the British Museum (Inv. No. WB.5), dated 1554 and discussed in detail below. The additional works that one can attribute stylistically to 1554-57 suggest that Ghisi was physically working in Paris and Fontainebleau, perhaps on the invitation of Primaticcio.<sup>266</sup> While it is unlikely that Ghisi worked with Primaticcio during his time in Mantua (as he was only a young boy at that time), Giovanni Battista Scultori, or even Bertani may have facilitated a correspondence. Just a few years later, in 1557, Ghisi released prints made after the paintings by his brother, Teodoro, perhaps anticipating that Teodoro's designs would do well with a French audience. Two years later, in 1559, Ghisi released his *Three Fates*, based on the work of Giulio Romano, with a French royal privilege. [Fig. 60]

As in many places, privileges, Royal or otherwise were more commonly granted to whole books, making Ghisi among the first printmakers ever in France to receive such

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<sup>264</sup> Bellini, *Ghisi*, 21.

<sup>265</sup> "insieme con messer Giorgio Ghisi Mantouano, huomo veramente hoggidi raro al mondo, in tagliar rami, lavorare alla Azamina di più varie sorti." Giovanni Battista Bertani, *Gli oscuri et difficili passi dell'opera ionica di Vitruvio*, Mantua, 1558, EV recto.

<sup>266</sup> Bellini, *Ghisi*, 22; Boorsch, *Ghisi*, 18-9.

a privilege on an individual print.<sup>267</sup> In fact, Ghisi earned privileges for three separate prints, the above-mentioned *Three Fates*, along with *The Allegory of Birth*, also based on a work designed by Giulio Romano, dated 1560 and his *Calumny of Apelles*, from the same year, based on a design by Luca Penni, another acolyte of Raphael.<sup>268</sup> [Figs. 61 and 62] It has been suggested that Ghisi was granted the privilege by the short-lived King Francis II, who may have been influenced in this by his Italian mother, Catherine de Medici.<sup>269</sup> Ghisi likely applied for the privileges himself, suggesting that he needed to protect his own interests to a relatively extreme degree. The only other single print to have received a privilege prior to Ghisi's was granted to Pierre Woeiriot (1532-99), whose patron was Charles III, Duke of Lorraine, son-in-law to Henry II, predecessor to Francis II.<sup>270</sup> In addition to being a printmaker, like Ghisi, Woeiriot was also a silversmith and armor designer.<sup>271</sup> At about the same time as Ghisi and Woeiriot's royal privileges, it would seem that the elusive printmaker Pierre Milan (who never signed any of his prints) also received the Royal privilege for prints made after the designs of the recently deceased Rosso Fiorentino.<sup>272</sup> Milan's privileged prints include a number of prints featuring various examples of ornamental tableware made seemingly from precious metals. Could it be more than coincidence that these three printmakers, who worked in

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<sup>267</sup> For a review of the first such privileges granted to books, according to country, see Christopher Witcombe, *Copyright In the Renaissance: Prints and the 'privilegio' In Sixteenth-Century Venice and Rome* (Leiden: Brill, 2004): 330-339.

<sup>268</sup> Boorsch, *Ghisi*, 105, 107, 111, 234; Bellini, *Ghisi*, 165-79.

<sup>269</sup> Boorsch, *Ghisi*, 234.

<sup>270</sup> Boorsch, *Ghisi*, 234.

<sup>271</sup> Peter Fuhring, "A Nineteenth-Century Forgery of a Woeiriot Print," *Print Quarterly*, 7 (1990): 282-285

<sup>272</sup> Witcombe, *Copyright*, 343 n. 64; Yves Metman, "Un graveur inconnu de l'Ecole de Fontainebleau," *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance*, I (1947): 202-14. On the metalwork specifically, see Peter Fuhring, *The French Renaissance In Prints From the Bibliothèque Nationale De France*. (Los Angeles: Grunwald Center for the Graphic Arts, University of California, Los Angeles, 1994): Cats. 80-82.



the same additional arts, were intent on protecting their engraved interests from a specific, as yet unidentified, threat?

Whatever potential threat these three printmakers faced in France, Ghisi's choice to apply for a privilege was also likely influenced by his previous work with Cock in Antwerp, who received a number of imperial privileges from Charles V between 1550 and 1555, for five of Ghisi's prints from this period, discussed above.<sup>273</sup> However, it should be noted that the majority of Cock's privileged prints were not mythological or religious subjects, but more typically maps, topographical views and specifically, views of, rather uniquely, ruined Roman ruins.<sup>274</sup> It is also important to note that in the case of Cock, and Ghisi and Milan in France, the printmakers were making prints after fairly famous artists (Giulio Romano, Rosso Fiorentino and Luca Penni) and may have been applying for the privileges simply in order to protect their "monopoly" on the designs or drawings that they held made by these artists.

That Ghisi was in France from circa 1559 can be confirmed by the privilege on the three plates mentioned above, along with the fact that many of his prints from this period were printed on paper bearing French watermarks.<sup>275</sup> Further, an unfinished state of one of his prints, *Hercules Resting from his Labors*, discussed below, is in the Bibliothèque Nationale, with the presumed design drawing by Giulio Romano also in the French collection of Alençon.<sup>276</sup> [Figs. 63 and 64] Ghisi appears to have still been in France on December 15, 1562, when he sent his first surviving letter, one of thanks to an

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<sup>273</sup> Witcombe, *Copyright*, 340-1.

<sup>274</sup> Witcombe, *Copyright*, 340-1; see again Heuer, "Hieronymus," 387-408.

<sup>275</sup> Boorsch, *Ghisi*, 18-19.

<sup>276</sup> Boorsch, *Ghisi*, 18-19.

unnamed recipient, his “Lord and most observant patron”, possibly identifiable as Cardinal Ercole Gonzaga, *de facto* prince of Mantua.<sup>277</sup>

He may have returned to Mantua circa 1564/5, but regardless, he must have been in Mantua by 1566, when he met Vasari, who was there on his second visit, and mistook Ghisi as a son of Scultori’s. On 4 October, 1569, a legal document attests to the division of property between Giorgio and his brother, Teodoro, probably signaling the death of their parents, and while not absolute proof of his presence in Mantua, suggests that he was most likely there.<sup>278</sup> In 1570, he appears to have made a second surviving piece of damascened arms, a sword pommel, most recently in Budapest, also discussed below. By 1574, he is noted in documents, along with his brother, as working in the Palazzo Te, preparing for the state visit of the French king, Henry III.<sup>279</sup> Between the years of 1573-5, it is very likely that Ghisi sent a number of his plates to Rome in the care of Adamo, in order to be published by Lafreri and Adamo, all of which were released as second and even third editions.

Ghisi appears to have returned home in his late 50s in order to seek a permanent, salaried position in the Gonzaga court. Instead of a calm retirement and productive leisure, Ghisi found himself during his final few years repeatedly begging for funds with which to pay his assistants and suppliers, and clemency in the payment of his own fines and debts.<sup>280</sup> On December 6, 1576, Giorgio and Teodoro were granted a property in the Contrada del Cigno, Mantua.<sup>281</sup> From 1577 until his death in 1582, Ghisi was employed as the keeper of the Gonzaga, precious metals and master of the Ducal wardrobe, a

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<sup>277</sup> Boorsch, *Ghisi*, 227.

<sup>278</sup> Boorsch, *Ghisi*, 19.

<sup>279</sup> ASM, Archivio Gonzaga, Busta 389, found by Renato Berzaghi, published by Boorsch, *Ghisi*, 29, n. 20)

<sup>280</sup> Boorsch, *Ghisi*, 227-8.

<sup>281</sup> Boorsch, *Ghisi*, 20.

position clearly linked to Ghisi's masterful work as a damascener, and less as a printmaker.<sup>282</sup> About this, Landau observed, "I have the feeling that the Gonzagas knew what they were doing when they employed him for the skills he had acquired as a goldsmith rather than as a printmaker."<sup>283</sup> During this time, Ghisi maintained an inventory book of precious gems, some of which are accompanied by drawings of entered items, likely recorded (although not necessarily made) by his own hand.<sup>284</sup> Towards the end of his life, there survives a series of letters from Ghisi to Duke Guglielmo Gonzaga, in which he thanks him for the repeated forgiveness of fines for unspecified infractions, and in at least one case, asks the Duke for funds with which to pay Ducal debts.<sup>285</sup> On December 15, 1582, Ghisi died of fever, leaving a wife, Lucia Nicolini, who died within a year, his brother, Teodoro, who lived until 1601, and no children.<sup>286</sup>

### **Collaborator or copyist?**

Of the approximately 63 prints made by Ghisi, the case can be made for no more than six to have been designed by the artist himself. Thus, almost his entire corpus is arguably based on the creative endeavors of other artists. The nature of his work with these other artists likely varied, in that some, such as his work after Giovanni Battista Scultori, Luca Penni, Francesco Primaticcio, Giovanni Battista Bertani and his brother, Teodoro, may have been collaborative. Other work, such as his prints after Francesco Salviati and Michelangelo, likely based on drawings obtained by Ghisi was engraved without the express permission, or at least, direct involvement, of the original artist.

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<sup>282</sup> Boorsch, *Ghisi*, 22.

<sup>283</sup> Landau, "Review," 41.

<sup>284</sup> Boorsch, *Ghisi*, 21-2; Archivio di Stato di Mantova, Archivio Gonzaga, busta 400; David S. Chambers and Jane Martineau, *Splendours of the Gonzaga*, exh. cat. (Milan: Amilcare Pizzi, 1981): 223-4.

<sup>285</sup> Archivio di Stato, Mantua, Archivio Gonzaga, Busta 2606, 2609, 2615, 2617, 2619: 25 February 1578; 12 June 1579; 8 October 1579; 12 May 1581; 30 August 1581; 19 October 1581; 19 December 1581; August 1582; 26 November 1582; 2 December 1582.

<sup>286</sup> Boorsch, *Ghisi*, 22.

Without the survival of much of the source material from which Ghisi appears to have worked, it is difficult at times to disentangle Ghisi's contribution from that of the original artist/designer. However, from the source material that does survive, it is clear that Ghisi appears to have made a great many alterations and additions to compositions. These alterations made the designs more appropriate to the medium of print, and even, in one case, famously transformed the subject of a print with the addition of a narrative caption.<sup>287</sup> From a survey of Ghisi's collaborative relationships, it becomes clear that he sought to engrave compositions by a variety of artists, each print attesting to his abilities to work in many different styles. By embracing such artists as his sources, Ghisi himself was highlighting his own innovative methods in his art. While Ghisi ultimately worked on models set by other artists, he does appear to have had some say over the types of prints that he engraved. Many of his engravings feature sophisticated subjects in which he may have had a personal interest.

In light of the *casa degli stampatori* fire of 1550, which can potentially be linked to Giovanni Battista Scultori, the prints made by Ghisi after Giovanni Battista Scultori warrant special discussion. Over the course of his career, Ghisi made at least two prints after his master. In both, *Sinon Deceiving the Trojans* and *The Fall of Troy* Ghisi credits Giovanni Battista as the inventor of the compositions in an inscription: "I. BA. Mantuanus. In.", but they go undated. [Figs. 65 and 66] Stylistically, various scholars have identified them as post 1543, but there is no concrete reason for them to pre-date

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<sup>287</sup> Ghisi modified the compositions of Raphael's *School of Athens* (1550) and the *Disputa* (1552) to suit the engraving medium, and represent a transition point in the printmaker's technical and translational abilities, even going so far as to change the title of the former to the Acts of the Apostles, by including text from the Bible. The implications of this alteration have been well analyzed by Michael Bury and Jeremy Wood. Bury, "Engravings," 16; and Jeremy Wood, "Cannibalized Prints and Early Art History," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 51 (1988): 219.

1550, the year of the fire.<sup>288</sup> It is likely, given the inscription that Ghisi made these two prints, after the designs, real or remembered, of Giovanni Battista. While Ghisi may have made such prints for any number of reasons, including the wearing out of the original plates, or as a training exercise, it is equally possible, indeed most likely, that Ghisi made the prints to replace those lost in the printshop fire. If this is the case, then this could indicate the value of those plates that were destroyed. Neither Giovanni Battista's print nor plates of *Sinon Deceiving the Trojans* and *The Fall of Troy* survive, suggesting that Ghisi's plates were intended to replace those lost in the conflagration.

In his collaborative work, such as can be seen in his print after Bertani's designs, Ghisi appears to have held the trust of his colleague. Very few of Bertani's designs were perpetuated through the print medium, and it would seem that he trusted Ghisi implicitly with the reproduction of his own designs, perhaps in the hope that such a collaboration would widen the international reputation of the former. In writing about Bertani, Vasari groups him not even among the heirs of Giulio Romano, but with "Lombard sculptors and painters" and does not say much, except to list some of the projects that he had undertaken, and to note, rather damningly, "he has not equaled those [things] made by Giulio himself."<sup>289</sup> At the time of Vasari's second visit to Mantua, Bertani was close to completing his work on the Ducal church of St Barbara, and while Vasari mentions Brusascorci's altarpiece, designed by Bertani, of the Martyrdom of St Barbara, he fails to note anything about the church itself. Bertani could be forgiven for wishing to amplify his international reputation, likely seeing Ghisi's prints as an ideal way in which to do this. It is compelling to consider, however, that Bertani himself does not seem to have

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<sup>288</sup> Bellini, *Ghisi*, 52-7; Boorsch, *Ghisi*, 49-52.

<sup>289</sup> Vasari, *Vite*, 1881, 487-8.

owned any prints after his designs, at least at the time of his death. According to Rebecchini, who studied an inventory of Bertani's goods in 1576, the artist held "22 heads of plaster, two images of the crucified Christ, two paintings of unspecified subject, un quadro grande con Marte et Venere, one landscape and a few prints of landscapes."<sup>290</sup> Unless Ghisi's prints after Bertani's designs were mistakenly identified as "landscapes," a possibility to be sure, Bertani does not appear to have owned prints after his works at the time of his death.

*The Judgment of Paris*, one of the prints published by Cock with an Imperial privilege, can offer some very specific insight into the collaborative relationship between Bertani and Ghisi. It measures 15.9 x 21 inches and appears very similar to a source drawing by Bertani, now in the Musei Civici del Visconteo, Pavia.<sup>291</sup> [Figs. 59 and 67] The most significant change made by Ghisi in this print is in the landscape in the background, which exhibits significant Flemish influences, an adaptation made by Ghisi probably to suit his Northern surroundings, and possibly audience, in the same way as Ghisi's print after Bronzino's *Nativity*.<sup>292</sup> It is also compelling to consider that Ghisi appears to have made both of these prints while in Antwerp, with Bertani in Mantua, suggesting that Ghisi himself had the ultimate control over the final project.<sup>293</sup>

The first two states of the *Judgment of Paris* were proof states, suggested by the fact that certain elements were only added in the third and final state, and also that the tablets intended to hold inscriptions are only included in the third state.<sup>294</sup> In the third state, the tablet at the lower left reads: "Baptista Bertano Mantuanus Inventor Georgius

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<sup>290</sup> Rebecchini, *Private*, 185.

<sup>291</sup> Bellini, *Ghisi*, 117; Boorsch, *Ghisi*, 81.

<sup>292</sup> Bury, "Engravings," 9.

<sup>293</sup> Bellini, *Ghisi*, 117; Boorsch, *Ghisi*, 79.

<sup>294</sup> Bellini, *Ghisi*, 115; Boorsch, *Ghisi*, 79.

Ghisi Mantuanus fecit Hieronymus Cock Excude. MDLV Cu[m] Gra[tia] et Pre[vilegio] Caes[ar] M. ad Sexen[n]ium.” In several cases, the third state of the print was pulled with a second plate that added a separate inscription along the bottom of the print, reading: “Quantum forma fugax, quantum Venus improba posit, exemplo est stolidi iudicium Paridis” (The judgment of foolish Paris is an example of how fleeting beauty is and how inauspicious Venus can be.)<sup>295</sup> While perhaps inconsequential, it is important to note that rather unusually, Bertani’s name appears first in the inscription, and that both Bertani and Ghisi are noted as being Mantuan. As with the *Vision of Ezekiel*, the Mantuan nationality of the two artists may indicate the intended Northern audience of the print.

Bertani’s drawing used a previous print as a touchstone for his design. The *Judgment of Paris* owes many design and content hallmarks to Marcantonio Raimondi’s print of the same subject, and also to Giulio Romano’s design for the Sala di Psiche in the Palazzo Te, most especially in Paris’s pose, so like Apollo’s pose in Giulio’s fresco.<sup>296</sup> [Figs. 68 and 69] However, in overall effect, Bertani’s design for Ghisi’s print is very different from Marcantonio’s print, probably intentionally so, in order to encourage comparison. In Bertani’s design, all of the figures and action have been pushed forward to the front of the pictorial zone. The formation of various people within the composition, pressed forward into a single linear frame, and especially the seated position of Paris, recall the upper register of the Gemma Augustea, made in the 1<sup>st</sup> century and currently in the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna.<sup>297</sup> [Fig. 70]

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<sup>295</sup> Boorsch, *Ghisi*, 79.

<sup>296</sup> Boorsch, *Ghisi*, 79-80.

<sup>297</sup> Albert Rubens and Heinz Kähler. *Alberti Rubeni Dissertatio De Gemma Augustea*. (Berlin: Mann, 1968); John Pollini, “The Gemma Augustea: Ideology, Rhetorical Imagery, and the Creation of a Dynastic Narrative,” *Narrative and Event In Ancient Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993): 258-98.

The center zone of the print reveals a wide-reaching landscape, while the upper zone is made up of a complicated view of heaven, complete with Apollo heralding dawn in his *quadriga*, Selene bringing the moon to set, and an eagle, presumably Jupiter, in a temple niche, surrounded by a banner of astrological signs. One may well question the purpose of the celestial zone in relation to the earthly happenings surrounding Paris and his fateful judgment, as they may seem to appear as two rather distinct prints.

The astrological and celestial elements are also present in Marcantonio's print, although the way in which they are depicted is very different. Instead of the three distinct zones in Ghisi's print, the gods in Marcantonio's print impinge on the terrestrial zone, swooping down to near ground level on a cloud. The celestial elements emphasize the extent to which the lives of mythological men are subject to the passions and vicissitudes of the gods, who invade the terrestrial world not only to mark the passing of time (heralding the days and the nights), but also to wreak havoc on earthly events. Another significant difference between the two prints are that the three goddesses are virtually nude in Marcantonio's print, while in Bertani's design and Ghisi's print, only Venus is nude (as is entirely conventional), while Juno and Minerva are more modestly clothed: Juno descends from her chariot, the hem of her veil held in an ancient Roman gesture of modesty at her ear, while Minerva wears her helmet, and is relinquishing her shield to two putti attendants.

The stylistic differences between Bertani's drawing and Ghisi's prints are subtle, but significant. Perhaps the most noticeable of these differences is in the central zone of the design, that is, the landscape that divides heaven from earth. In the drawing, Bertani has filled the background to the right with a simple rocky surface, while Ghisi's three



states feature increasingly more finished versions of a seaside city, with a mountain range in the further distance. The landscape emanates a sense of peace: rolling hills graced by periodic trees lead into the city, and birds fly overhead, a contrast to the ensuing destruction that will result from Paris's judgment.

The differences between the print and drawing extend to the landscape features directly surrounding Paris and the rocky outcrop overshadowing the group of figures at center. Ghisi has seated Paris at the base of a fragmented, damaged trunk of a tree, its jagged top, dark shading, and craggy branches acting in stark contrast to the gleaming white effect of Paris's muscled, nude body, and soft peaked Phrygian cap. In Bertani's original drawing, Paris is seated, resting against a leafy shrub, as if in testament to his seeming virility. Instead of the leafy shrubs that cover Ghisi's outcrop, Bertani has a single leafy tree growing behind the figure of Venus, her fecundity so potent that it makes the vegetation flourish around her.

These changes to the landscape and vegetation in Ghisi's print are not purely cosmetic, but in fact well reasoned alterations that improve one's appreciation of the subject and enhance the appeal of the print for a wider European market. Not only do Ghisi's changes make the print more visually interesting, with the creation of a third zone within the structure of the print, but also the trees and landscape offer an ominous foreshadowing of the disastrous outcome of the story. The viewer likely knows the outcome of Paris's disastrous judgment, and Ghisi's alterations make a nod to such knowledge. While it was not uncommon for printmakers to fill in or alter the background of a print, as was the case with Marcantonio Raimondi's *Massacre of the Innocents*, Ghisi's changes to the area surrounding the figure of Paris appear to be more than just

filling in the background, and instead foreshadow the narrative itself.<sup>298</sup> That Bertani permitted Ghisi to make these alterations testifies to the pair's seemingly equitable working relationship, in which Ghisi was free to alter the design and thus the interpretation of the subject.

Between the rare second and more common third states, Ghisi added two more birds flying in the sky, as well as a tiny bird, perhaps a pelican, sitting on the small wooden stub in the stream, just above the dog resting on the bank.<sup>299</sup> [Fig. 71] The size of the small birds in the sky is correct, given that they are viewed from a distance; however, the size of the pelican in the stream is illogical. The tiny bird does not feature in the design by Bertani, nor does such a bird appear in the print by Marcantonio Raimondi. Its inclusion appears to have been intended to give pause to the viewer, and perhaps even to convey some additional meaning, perhaps emblematic with its Christological connections, and as yet to be interpreted. The small pelican is easily contrasted with the large eagle at the centre of the astrological band. At the least, it is possible that Ghisi was referring to the pelican, not as a bird willing to tear off its own flesh in order to nourish its young, but instead, like Paris, as a greedy bird, willing to take more than it needs. Whatever its purpose, the tiny bird works to remind a viewer to lean in and search out such miniscule details, celebrating the intimate nature of prints such as this.

### **The Re-Animation of Love**

In addition to collaborating with his friend, Bertani, Ghisi also produced at least two prints after paintings by his brother, Teodoro, including his *Venus and Adonis* and *Angelica and Medoro*, both from circa 1557. [Fig. 72 and 73] The two prints act as

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<sup>298</sup> Pon, *Raphael*, 118-135.

<sup>299</sup> Boorsch, *Ghisi*, 78-81; Bellini, *Ghisi*, 115-119.

attractive pendants to each other: one, a love story from ancient mythology, the other, a love story from a sixteenth-century epic poem. The sizes of the two prints are fairly similar, *Venus and Adonis* measures 12.5 x 8.8 inches, while *Angelica and Medoro* measures 11.7 x 8.3 inches. Formally, they share their compositions: both couples are seated outside, under the shade of trees, with a view to a distant landscape beyond. Both are inspired by poetic sources, becoming visual poetry themselves. In the case of *Venus and Adonis*, the artists appear to have relied, rather loosely, upon Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, and in the case of *Angelica and Medoro*, on Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*. Most importantly, both include meta-thematic references to engraving itself, but where one illustrates a moment when the main characters are absorbed in each other, the other includes figures who look out directly to the viewer, opening a dialogue between participant and spectator.

In the case of *Venus and Adonis*, Adonis and a putto acknowledge the viewer with their direct gaze out to the viewer. Their acknowledgement of a beholder in this supposedly private romantic tryst demonstrates a knowledge that the putto, Adonis and the viewer share, knowledge that the mortal lover will shortly depart, and come to his death. The hierarchy of knowledge created places Venus in a position of complete ignorance, Adonis in a position of partial ignorance (that his departure will lead to his death), and the putto and viewer in a position of full knowledge of the tale, and the sad fate of Adonis. However, *Angelica and Medoro* are fully immersed in their action, of recording their love in an inscription in the trunk of a tree. The gaze of the putto who carries the torch of true love in a forward facing pose allows him to address the viewer, and encourages interaction with the story.

Medoro's attentive carving, with his true love, Angelica, as his enraptured spectator, might refer to Ghisi's own attention and effort in making the plate for the print. Conversely, the spear held by Adonis could also stand in for an instrument of artistic creation, but in this case, will lead only to death. Ghisi is calling attention to his power as creator of these two prints, in one case, defeating even the ever-fecund Venus in the act of creation. In his depiction of Venus and Adonis, Ghisi re-animates the lovers, bringing Adonis back to life in a way that even Venus is incapable.

Teodoro's painting of *Venus and Adonis* was probably inspired by the painting of the same subject by Titian, originally designed as one of his *poesie* for King Philip II of Spain, from circa 1553-54.<sup>300</sup> [Fig. 74] Teodoro's *Venus and Adonis* was recorded in the Gonzaga inventory of 1627, but the painting has now been lost, making it impossible to compare.<sup>301</sup> While certainly the poses of Venus and Adonis are similar to those in Titian's picture, the surrounding scenery is very different. Ghisi carved the figures of the two lovers in high relief, making them far darker and more prominent than the details in the background and foreground. Rather than picturing the moment at which Adonis appears to be leaving Venus, as Titian did, Teodoro and Ghisi show a moment prior to his departure.

Like Titian, who was criticized for straying from the verses by Raffaello Borghini, Ghisi's *Venus and Adonis* could also in part be seen to do the same, while still taking limited cues from the passage concerning the two lovers in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.<sup>302</sup> About Titian's version, Borghini said:

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<sup>300</sup> Bellini, *Ghisi*, 145.

<sup>301</sup> Bellini, *Ghisi*, 145

<sup>302</sup> Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, X, II, 547ff. David Rosand, "Inventing Mythologies: The Painter's Poetry," *The Cambridge Companion to Titian* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004): 48.

And from the poets it is said that Adonis, when he was propositioned by Venus, threw himself on his knees at her feet. He thanked her for having deigned to concede her divine beauty to a mortal man and was quite ready, with reverence, to serve her. From this it appears that Titian failed in the invention. He showed Adonis fleeing from Venus, who is in the act of embracing him. Here most [authorities] desire that they embrace each other. And when she, having to go up into Heaven, advised him to abstain from going to hunt fierce wild animals, she from him, and not he from her, departed, flying towards the sky.<sup>303</sup>

Ghisi appears to have done much the same in his version of the tale. While it is possible that Ghisi was familiar with Ovid's text in Latin, it seems more likely that Ghisi may have consulted Lodovico Dolce's 1553 Italian translation of the *Metamorphoses*, published in Venice by Giolito de Ferrari.<sup>304</sup> In Ghisi's version, Venus embraces him, and Adonis appears to be in the process of rising from his seat, clasping his spear as if leaning on it for support. Ghisi has extrapolated some visual details from the text and his knowledge of the attributes of these mythical characters. A rose plant wrapped around the trunk of a tree flanks the leg of Venus; a metaphor for the amorous couple themselves, with Venus entwined around the body of her lover. The couple is shaded by the leaves of a myrtle tree, a tree commonly associated with Venus, in the upper right of the print. Ghisi's print also includes panting hounds behind the figure of Adonis and the head of a slain boar, whose presence marks Ovid's line, translated by Dolce, "The boars have a fire in their teeth, which can cleave a wall."<sup>305</sup> The attending putto appears to have caught a hare, another common companion of Venus, which could be one of those belonging to

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<sup>303</sup> Raffaello Borghini, *Il Riposo*, Trans. Lloyd H. Ellis (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2007): Book 1, 65.

<sup>304</sup> Lodovico Dolce, *Le Trasformationi Di M. Lodovico Dolce ; Di Nvovo Ristampate, e Da Lui Ricorrette, & In Diuersi Luoghi Ampliate: Con La Tauola Delle Fauole...* (Venice: G. Giolito de Ferrari, 1553).

<sup>305</sup> "Hanno i cinghiai quasi un'ardente face ne'denti, che potrian fendere un muro." Dolce, *Trasformationi*, 220.

Venus's "timid hares."<sup>306</sup> This print made by Ghisi, after Teodoro's painting exemplifies a distant and creative rendering of Ovid's lines, creating a fresh view of these two lovers, and perhaps on the nature of love and creation itself.

The second print, in which Ghisi credits Teodoro with the invention, is his *Angelica and Medoro*. [Fig. 73] Unlike with *Venus and Adonis*, the print follows the verses of Ludovico Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* fairly closely.<sup>307</sup> It is not only this, but also the very composition of the print that makes one appreciate the two prints as pendants to each other: the two sets of lovers sit entwined, surrounded by deep and shady vegetation, with a distant landscape engraved in light relief through a clearing in the trees. Unfortunately, Teodoro's original painting on which this print is thought to have been based has also been lost. It too was included in the 1627 Gonzaga inventory, but later appeared in the collection of the Cabinet Braamcamp in Amsterdam in 1756, since disappearing.<sup>308</sup>

These two prints, the only identifiable examples of the Ghisi brothers' collaboration, appear to reflect a close working relationship. Not only was Giorgio extremely sensitive to modeling his print on the distinct style of Teodoro, especially in the figures, one can also see that Giorgio may have been allowed some flexibility in his creation of the background landscapes, which bear much resemblance to those in his other prints. The probable consideration of the textual sources by Ovid and Ariosto inspires one to envision a collaborative relationship in which the two brothers may have played with the ways in which they could reference the texts in subtle ways, including

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<sup>306</sup> "e i Lepri humili," Dolce, *Transformationi*, 219.

<sup>307</sup> Boorsch, *Ghisi*, 150; Ludovico Ariosto, *Orlando Furioso*, trans. Sir John Harington, 1591, ed. Robert McNulty (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972): 212, XIX, v. 28.

<sup>308</sup> Bellini, *Ghisi*, 147-8; Boorsch, *Ghisi*, 150.

metaphors for love and references to other sixteenth-century paintings. Given the success of these two prints, one might wonder why more printed collaborations were not executed. On a most basic level, perhaps Teodoro Ghisi did not possess the necessary international fame to warrant Ghisi's production of prints after his work.

The circumstances in which the paintings were commissioned (if they were) are unknown, but that the two paintings appeared in the Gonzaga collection in 1627 could suggest that they were intended for some member of the Ducal family or a courtier.<sup>309</sup> The two plates made their way to Rome, perhaps via Adamo Scultori, as Lafreri released the second state of *Angelica and Medoro* (most probably between 1573-5) and Nicholas van Aelst released the fourth state of *Venus and Adonis*.<sup>310</sup> Both plates were then passed down into the collection of the Calcographia Nazionale, but owing to their supposed lewdness, were destroyed by order of Pope Leo XII in 1823.<sup>311</sup>

### **Hercules, In the Flesh**

While Ghisi's *Vision of Ezekiel* celebrates his artistic ability to re-animate the dead, it also celebrates Ghisi's ability to animate three-dimensional sculpture, as he did so beautifully with his caryatid figures. Perhaps not unlike Pygmalion, Ghisi identifies himself as a sculptor in his prints, who possesses the power and skill to bring sculpture to life. This can be seen in a number of his prints, but none more prominently than in his print after the Hercules Farnese, which measures 14.2 by 8.6 inches. [Fig. 75]. This is

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<sup>309</sup> Alessandro Luzio, *La Galleria dei Gonzaga venduta all'Inghilterra nel 1627-28* (Milan: L.F. Cogliati, 1913): 96.

<sup>310</sup> Bellini, *Ghisi*, 143-8; Boorsch, *Ghisi*, 146-50.

<sup>311</sup> It was not just Ghisi's plates that were destroyed at this time, but any design designated as "lewd." This included some plates by Lodovico Dorigny, after the frescoes at the Villa Farnesina, while plates by Fono (?) of *Venus* were recut so that the figures were clothed. Further destruction of plates occurred over the course of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, when plates were melted down to make coin. "The Government Engraving Institute of Rome," *The Printing Times and Lithographer*, 9 (1883): 94. See also Bellini, *Ghisi*, 146 and 149.

Ghisi's only print that explicitly reproduces a piece of three-dimensional sculpture completely in the round. In addition to this print, Ghisi made two other prints with Hercules as his subject: *Hercules Resting from his Labors*, discussed below, and his print after Bertani's design featuring Hercules standing victorious over the Hydra, made to be the frontispiece of Bertani's book on Vitruvius.<sup>312</sup> [Figs. 63, 76 and 77] Bertani's design for his Hercules was certainly influenced by ancient sculpture and can be traced to a stucco figure of Hercules surviving in Giulio Romano's own home, perhaps too influenced by the Hercules Farnese itself.<sup>313</sup> [Fig. 78] Ghisi's *Hercules Farnese* demonstrates Ghisi's superb ability to render a three-dimensional object as an engraving, along with his dedication to asserting that engraving is a type of sculpture on its own.

The Hercules Farnese sculpture was discovered in the Baths of Caracalla in 1540, just before Ghisi and Bertani's sojourn in Rome. [Fig. 79] The sculpture made its way into the Palazzo Farnese in Rome by 1556, and remained there until it was transported from Rome to Naples with the Farnese collection, residing now in the National Archaeology Museum in Naples.<sup>314</sup> According to Ullisse Aldrovandi, who first recorded the sculpture as being in the Palazzo Farnese, the legs of the statue were missing when it was originally found, and they were restored by Guglielmo della Porta.<sup>315</sup> Della Porta's legs were only replaced by the originals (found in 1560) in the eighteenth century, when

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<sup>312</sup> This print is traditionally linked to Cardinal Ercole Gonzaga for a number of reasons, including the fact that the book for which it serves as the frontispiece was dedicated to the Cardinal. The connection with Ercole is strengthened by the fact that the Gonzaga coat of arms rests above the head of Hercules, and is crowned by a cardinal's hat. However, the engraving was not printed integrally with the rest of the book, and is found as a loose leaf, bound in separately, as in the case of the copy found at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Boorsch, *Ghisi*, 103-4. Despite the cardinal's hat, it might be proposed that the print was also made to commemorate and celebrate Ercole's brother, Ferrante Gonzaga, who was known to take on the guise of Hercules defeating the Hydra, as seen in his portrait medal made by Leone Leoni in circa 1555. Ghisi made this print around 1558, the year that Ferrante Gonzaga died in battle.

<sup>313</sup> Bellini, *Ghisi*, 157.

<sup>314</sup> Bellini, *Ghisi*, 250.

<sup>315</sup> Boorsch, *Ghisi*, 189.



it was transferred to Naples.<sup>316</sup> Ghisi's print appears to be connected with and possibly a replacement for another, earlier print of the statue, most notably that by Jacob Bos from 1562, but the two prints are considerably different from each other in execution.<sup>317</sup> [Fig. 80] Ghisi's rendering of the sculpture has a notable *sfumato* softening in the contours of Hercules' muscles, imbuing the figure with a natural liveliness that Bos's impossibly chiseled representation of Hercules simply does not possess.

In the discussion of prints made after sculpture, ancient or otherwise, it is important to note that the printmaker "faces all the problems of finding equivalents in one medium for the forms and colours of another, but in an especially forceful way because of the particular difficulties of conveying three dimensions in two."<sup>318</sup> With a few seemingly minor intercessions, Ghisi created a unique representation of this most famous sculpture. Ghisi has located his sculptural hero in a rectangular niche, a departure from the typical rounded niches, in which most ancient sculptures are pictured in contemporary prints. The contours of Ghisi's "box" act in strong contrast to the rounded curves of Hercules's pose. Hercules's downward gaze in the surviving statue has been replaced by softly focused eyes in Ghisi's print, looking more to his left than down: the absence of painted eyes in the statue allowed Ghisi an opportunity to exercise artistic license. The face of Hercules resembles less a hardened and pensive hero, and more a quietly observing, benign Joseph at the Nativity. Rather than placing his Hercules on a flat plinth, as Bos and others do, Ghisi continues the craggy rock on which Hercules's club rests, so that it becomes the platform on which the hero stands. The rocky platform seems

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<sup>316</sup> Boorsch, *Ghisi*, 189-90.

<sup>317</sup> Bellini, *Ghisi*, 250.

<sup>318</sup> Michael Bury, "Beatrizet and the 'Reproduction' of Antique Relief Sculpture," *Print Quarterly*, 13 (1996): 2.

to continue out into the viewer's space, defying the confines of the niche. Finally, Ghisi has included a shadow of the sculpture in the niche, which also seems to traverse into the viewer's space: the very tip of shadow for Hercules's elbow comes out of the niche. Each of these effects, while seemingly minor, imbues the print of this marble sculpture with a natural quality that defies definition and containment, in effect re-animating this sculpted hero.

One cannot avoid discussions of the *paragone* between the arts when considering Ghisi's prints of Hercules, and especially his *Hercules Farnese*. Indeed, Ghisi could be seen to compete not only among the arts, but given that he "sculpts" his plates, he becomes a sort of double sculptor, carving images of sculptures. Unique to this latter print, the figure of Hercules seems to be outlined by a thin white line, an effect which Ghisi achieved by intentionally neglecting to engrave around the figure, seen best down the hero's left side. [Fig. 75a] This is, technically, a very difficult effect to create in engraving and through Ghisi's use of negative space, actually emphasizes the three-dimensional nature of the sculpture.

About Ghisi's engraving in general, but appropriate to this particular print in particular, Sharon Gregory observes:

What [Cornelis] Cort took from Ghisi in particular was the rendering of hard, clearly defined three-dimensional forms, through the use of curved hatching lines that gradually taper and swell. These hatches and crosshatches, when laid down in concentric series, were well suited to delineating muscular figures.<sup>319</sup>

In reproducing the ultimate muscular figure, Hercules, Ghisi is demonstrating his ability to "sculpt" and animate his own masterpiece, a task made all the more difficult by his subtle layers of engraving and focused carving that allowed him to utilize the negative

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<sup>319</sup> Gregory, *Vasari*, 313.

space around his sculpture. In the same way that Melion argues that Goltzius wins the *paragone* between ancient and modern artists with a new art, a “*nova reperta*,” unknown to the ancients, so too does Ghisi.<sup>320</sup>

The circumstances behind Ghisi’s making of his print after the Hercules Farnese are unknown. According to Christian Huelsen, Ghisi’s *Hercules Farnese* was commissioned by Claudio Duchetti, Lafreri’s nephew and heir, to be a replacement for Bos’s plate, presumably worn out from use.<sup>321</sup> Boorsch dates Ghisi’s plate to the late 1570s.<sup>322</sup> The only inscription on the plate is Ghisi’s monogram in the lower left hand corner, on a tablet: “G MF.” Despite an absence of publisher’s mark on the first state, the print does often appear in collections of the *Speculum Romanae Magnificentiae*, indicating that it must have made its way into the Lafreri/Duchetti operation. An engraving of the Hercules Farnese is recorded in the Lafreri catalogue from 1573: “Statua di Hercole famossissima in casa de Farnese,” however, it is perhaps more likely that this is Bos’s print, which bore Lafreri’s address from the first edition.<sup>323</sup>

Here, one could propose an alternative scenario for the publishing of the plate. As with so many of Ghisi’s and the Scultori’s prints, it seems much more likely that the plate came to Rome in the care of Adamo Scultori, when he entered into his brief partnership with Lafreri. That this print then made its way into the hands of Nicolas van Aelst and finally to Giovanni Orlandi’s enterprise confirms this hypothesis, given that they both acquired a number of Scultori plates, including three by Diana, albeit acquired from Lafreri’s heir, Claudio Duchetti. The plate finally made its way into the de Rossi

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<sup>320</sup> Melion, *Heroes*, 1091.

<sup>321</sup> Christian Huelsen, “Das Speculum Romanae Magnificentiae des Antonio Lafreri,” *Collectanae Variae Doctrinae Leoni S. Olschki*, Munich, 1921, 103.

<sup>322</sup> Boorsch, *Ghisi*, 190.

<sup>323</sup> F. Ehrle, *Roma prima di Sisto V: La pianta Du Pérac-Lafréry del 1577*, Rome, 1908, Appendices, 56.

Catalogue from 1677, but there are no surviving states reflecting the de Rossi address, perhaps because the market was at this point flooded by various prints of this most famous sculpture.<sup>324</sup> As with so many of the de Rossi plates, it was subsumed into the *Calcographia Nazionale*, only to be destroyed by order to Pope Pius XII, on account, of its “lewdness”.<sup>325</sup>

### **Heroic Labor**

In many ways, Ghisi’s travels worked in his favor as he made his prints: he absorbed the art that he saw, and used it in the making of his own art. The landscapes that comprise the backgrounds of so many of his prints, such as in his *Judgment of Paris*, *Venus and Adonis* and *Angelica and Medoro*, all discussed above, could be seen to reflect his copious travels. His landscapes appear multi-layered and full of port-views, city views and idyllic rural landscapes and work to place his figures in thoughtful, appropriate settings, animating them in such a way that their models are not. One especially engaging landscape is in the background of his remarkable *Hercules Resting from his Labors*, which measures 10.7 by 15.8 inches.<sup>326</sup> [Fig. 63] It is dated to 1567, by which time Ghisi may have been in Mantua. Ghisi took the figure of Hercules from a stucco figure designed by Giulio Romano for the Camera degli Stucchi in the Palazzo Te, on which Giovanni Battista Scultori worked, along with Primaticcio.<sup>327</sup> [Fig. 81] Related to the stucco is a drawing by Giulio Romano’s hand in the Musée des Beaux-Arts, Alençon, which shows the figure alone, holding his club and resting on a lion skin, much like the

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<sup>324</sup> Anna Grelle Iusco, ed. *Indice delle stampe intagliate in rame a bulino, e in acqua forte esistenti nella stamparia di Lorenzo Filippo de’ Rossi Apresto Santa Maria della Pace in Roma, 1735* (Rome: Artmide: 1996). For more on the de Rossi, see Consagra, “de Rossi”; Boorsch, “Vincenzo,” 51-57.

<sup>325</sup> Boorsch, *Ghisi*, 189; Bellini, *Ghisi*, 250-57.

<sup>326</sup> Boorsch, *Ghisi*, 145-5; Bellini, *Ghisi*, 226-8.

<sup>327</sup> Massari, *Giulio*, 178-9.

stucco figure.<sup>328</sup> [Fig. 64] Ghisi has echoed the arch that frames the stucco with his print design, transforming the curvature of the arch into a full tree, causing the clouds to take on a rounded form.

Intriguingly, Ghisi's lush landscape and view, which teems with life, overshadow the static figure of Hercules, the supposed subject of the print. The harbor directly beyond the figure includes two ships, which recall not only the ships in Giovanni Battista's *Naval Battle*, but also those by Raphael in the *Battle of Ostia* in the Stanza del'Incendio, among others. An island, connected to the mainland by only a bridge features a number of Roman ruins and the walled city beyond includes buildings and churches, one with an enormous dome. The city has certain hallmarks of a Northern city, not unlike a landscape that by Peter Breughel the Elder, after whom prints were made by none other than Cock.

Within the city, a gush of smoke rises, which has been interpreted as a "whimsical addition" to the composition.<sup>329</sup> Concerning the depiction of the "unrepresentable," such as a fire, Pliny the Elder considers the skill of Apelles, who could "paint that which could not be painted, thunder, lightening, and flashes."<sup>330</sup> In a letter from 30 July, 1526, Erasmus amplifies Pliny's comments in order to cast Alrecht Durer as a modern day Apelles, given his ability to also design additional natural phenomenon, including "fire" and "rays", and monochromatically, no less.<sup>331</sup> As Victor Stoichita points out, Marcantonio Raimondi included a raging fire in his so-called *Dream of Raphael*, observing that the fire occurs in a moment of deep dreaming, a "secondary level of

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<sup>328</sup> Bellini, *Ghisi*, 226.

<sup>329</sup> Boorsch, *Ghisi*, 145.

<sup>330</sup> "Pinxit et quae pingi non possunt, tonitrua, fulgetra, fulgura..." Pliny the Elder, *Historia Naturalis*, XXXV, 96.

<sup>331</sup> Erasmus, Desiderius, *Opus Epistolarum Des. Erasmi Roterodami*. P. S Allen, et al., eds, VI (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1906-1958): 371; Victor Stoichita, "Lochi di Fuoco," *Visuelle Topoi* (2003): 439-40.

reality,” although the presence of a fire in a composition does not necessarily have to be a narrative aspect.<sup>332</sup> A commonly depicted fire in both Northern and Italian scenes was the burning of Troy, a scene which Ghisi himself depicted when he copied the designs of Giovanni Battista Scultori in his *Fall of Troy*. As Stoichita observes, the presence of a fire in the later works by Breughal and Rubens, function as a reference to the five senses, encouraging the viewer to consider the work as a multi-sensory experience.<sup>333</sup> While a fire in a nocturnal scene might fulfill the practical function of illuminating the picture, a daytime fire such as the one in Ghisi’s print serves as a point of interest. The inclusion of the fire in Ghisi’s print ultimately works to demonstrate Ghisi’s skill with the burin.

It is worth noting the rarity of finding Hercules not battling his various foes, but at rest. His reclining position, with his bow and arrows cast aside, suggest that he is taking a well-deserved repose. The bucolic setting contrasts with Ghisi’s sprawling and teeming city, busy with construction and boat traffic, and apparently, fire. As Hercules looks away, the viewer might notice the heads of two figures approaching the hero, their bodies obscured by the crest of the hill. In Ghisi’s print, the repose of Hercules and the calm of nature are about to be disturbed.

*Hercules* is expertly designed and engraved, animating a single stuccho statue into a seemingly living being. Walter Melion has observed of the classical heroes engraved by Hendrick Goltzius: “the difficulty of engraving welcomes comparison with the ‘heroic strength’ required of a soldier.”<sup>334</sup> Certainly, Ghisi is seeking to make the same claim, framing his reclining hero within the skill that celebrates the artist’s own heroism.

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<sup>332</sup> Stoichita, “Lochi,” 441.

<sup>333</sup> Stoichita, “Lochi,” 442-3.

<sup>334</sup> Walter Melion, “Memorabilia aliquot Romanae strenuitatis exempla: The Thematics of Artisinal Virtue in Hendrick Goltzius’s ‘Roman Heroes’.” *Modern Language Notes*, 110 (1995): 1114. (1090-1134)

### *The Plight of the Artist*

The subject of Ghisi's *Hercules Farnese* is self-evident, however, many of his engravings have less obvious subjects. Among the most interesting and sophisticated prints of Ghisi's *oeuvre*, both in terms of the subject and technique, is his so called *Allegory of Life*, which is dated 1561. [Fig. 82] The print's many titles demonstrate the degree to which it has engaged viewers and scholars alike. It has been called, at various times, *The Dream of Raphael*, *The Dream of the Philosopher*, *The Melancholy of Michelangelo*, *The Torment of St Anthony* and now, by most, the *Allegory of Life*.<sup>335</sup> None of the titles should be discounted, as they each appear to bring something to a careful consideration of the print, and, significantly, work to demonstrate the many possible readings of the subject. Ghisi's *Allegory of Life* is not unlike Hans Sebald Beham's *Impossible*, a small print showing a man toiling to remove an impossibly large tree, dated 1549. *Impossible* appears to have no relation to myth or history and these two prints by Ghisi and Beham should instead be taken as emblematical, with multiple potential readings.<sup>336</sup> [Fig. 83] At first sight, the many creatures, both real and imagined, remind the viewer of the Torment of St Anthony, but the man at the center of the print does not have a nimbus, and the verses that adorn the print are not verses from a religious text, but rather from Virgil's *Aeneid*, which might seem to transform the print into a secular subject.

The first quotation, which appeared in the second, finished state, on a tablet positioned at the man's feet, reads "Sedet aeternum que sedebit i[n]foelix", meaning "The

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<sup>335</sup> Boorsch, *Ghisi*, 114-120; Albricci, "Sogno," 215-22; Benvenuto Disertori, "Fra incisori antichi e stampe rare, Il Sogno di Raffaello ossia la vita del saggio," *Emporium*, 64 (1926): 258-65; Robert Klein, "The Dream of Raphael," in Henri Zerner, "Ghisi et la gravure maniériste à Mantoue," *L'Oeil*, 88 (1962): 76; Bellini, *Ghisi*, 180-191.

<sup>336</sup> Merback, "*Impossible*," 1040-1042.

unhappy one sits and will sit forever,” a line from Book VI of the *Aeneid*.<sup>337</sup> Virgil’s line refers to the troubled Theseus, who is being punished for his betrayal of Ariadne and his hubris against the gods, part of a cautioning to “Learn justice: be warned, and don’t despise the gods.”<sup>338</sup> As if in reply, a second quote is inscribed into a tablet at the feet of a crowned woman, whose line reads, “Tu ne cede malis: Sed co[n]tra adventior ito,” meaning, “Do not yield to adversities, but go out to meet them more bravely.” This second line bears no direct relation to the first and comes from a previous section of Book VI of the *Aeneid*.<sup>339</sup>

These *Aeneid* quotes have caused one commentator to recognize the subject, perhaps too simply, as the descent into hell.<sup>340</sup> About it, Albricci has observed that “probably the engraving is not an illustration of the VI book of the *Aeneid*: to modern students it seems more likely a transposition into a philosophical key of the allegory of human life: man, who has badly guided the boat of his own existence, becomes a prisoner of the incubi and is saved by Reason.”<sup>341</sup> Ghisi has apparently plucked these Virgilian quotations from their original formation and recast them in this visually stimulating invention, so that his two figures might enter into a dialogue with each other. Ghisi’s print appears to be an attempt to create a new kind of Mantuan art, grounded in Virgil and the heritage of Raphael, while also drawing on the visual tradition of various depictions of the *Torment of St Anthony*, especially those Northern works featuring fantastical landscape painting.

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<sup>337</sup> Virgil, *Aeneid*, Book VI, Line 617.

<sup>338</sup> Virgil, *Aeneid*, Book VI, Line 620.

<sup>339</sup> Virgil, *Aeneid*, Book VI, Line 95.

<sup>340</sup> “Sedet aeternum que sedebit infoelix”; “Tu ne cede malis seb contra audentior ito”; “Raphaelis Urbinatis inventum Philippus Datus animi gratia fieri iussit”; “Giorgius Ghisi Mat F 1561”; Klein, “Dream,” 76.

<sup>341</sup> Albricci, “Sogno,” 215.



Ghisi's selection of these two quotations may not have been arbitrary: the earlier *Aeneid* inscription can be linked to the recently deceased Ferrante Gonzaga, through a portrait medal by Leone Leoni from 1556, on which was included the phrase "Tu ne cede malis."<sup>342</sup> A further aspect of the print that can be linked, albeit loosely, with Leoni and the Gonzaga, is the female figure at right, who seems to derive from a second medal, also made by Leoni, for Ferrante's daughter, Ippolita Gonzaga, with her possibly in the guise of the goddess, Diana. [Fig. 84] These two Gonzaga connections are sufficiently notable as to suggest that Ferrante's arm of the family may have been one intended audience for the print. However, Ferrante himself died in 1557, four years prior to the completion of this print.

The subject and meaning of the print are all the more complicated by the addition of further inscriptions, which credit Raphael as the inventor and dedicate the print to one Philippus Datus: "Raphaelis Urbinatus Inventum, Philippus Datus Animi Gratia Fieri Iussit" (Raphael of Urbino invented it, Philippus Datus commissioned it for the good of his soul). These additional inscriptions were also added by the second state, considered the first, finished state, and thus bear an intrinsic meaning to the print, however, they themselves cannot definitively assist in the identification of the subject. Firstly, the inscription connecting the print to Philippus Datus has proven fruitless, as he has yet to be identified. The inscription indicating that the print was "invented" by Raphael is deeply misleading in that only the figure of the bearded man bears any likeness to an invention of Raphael, a single figure in the *School of Athens*. [Fig. 85] Even here, Ghisi has altered Raphael's figure to such a degree that his "philosopher" now wears a long

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<sup>342</sup> Boorsch, *Ghisi*, 117.

beard, and has his arm outstretched.<sup>343</sup> Concerning this borrowing from Raphael, Ghisi might be working in much the same way as Beham, who borrowed his toiling figure in *Impossible* from a figure in Marcantonio Raimondi's *Abduction of Helen* (wherein Beham abducts an abductor), about which Merback observes:

The strategy is only the most obvious indicator of the exchange relationship that engravers like the Behams cultivated with their educated viewers. On the one side of this relationship one finds an artist deploying a poetic mode that combined blatant borrowing with a self-conscious manipulation of codes; on the other, a visually literate viewer who recognized the sources, pondered their transformation, and displayed his own erudite awareness of the nature of the game. It was the same culture of humanist intellectual exchange that delighted in trading medals with antique inscriptions and elucidating the *inventio* behind emblems and *imprese*, and that treated these activities as performative pastimes.<sup>344</sup>

Ghisi's philosopher figure, along with his inscription crediting Raphael, was intended to demonstrate his familiarity with Raphael's work, and also his clever ability to manipulate it.

Thus, these inscriptions have served only to confound, rather than to elucidate. However, remembering that Ghisi himself engraved the *School of Athens* 11 years before, crucially changing the subject to the *Acts of the Apostles* with a simple inscription, it becomes clear that the printmaker was engaging with issues of authorship.<sup>345</sup> Luca Penni has been cited most frequently as the ultimate designer for the *Allegory of Life*. This idea originated with Bartsch, but was proposed as recently as 1983 by Albricci.<sup>346</sup> While this may be the case, it is more compelling to consider Ghisi's intended subject (or subjects) for the print. To the many possible subjects, and the potential levels of meaning,

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<sup>343</sup> This figure remains unidentified by Vasari and contemporary sources.

<sup>344</sup> Merback, "Impossible," 1043.

<sup>345</sup> Bury, "Engravings," 4-19.

<sup>346</sup> Albricci, "Sogno," 215.

illustrated by the different titles of the print, should perhaps be added one more: *The Plight of the Artist*.

The central figure, perhaps an artist, stands tormented by figures of his own imagining. Real and mythical creatures, such as a merman, a chimera, and a cheetah surround him, mouths agape as if to consume him. He leans against a gnarled and dead tree, as if he himself has sucked the life from it. [Fig. 82a] Above him, an ancient amphitheater gives way to a waterfall: possibly referencing antiquity as a font of creative inspiration. His outreached hand strains impossibly for the verdant world across the water, and the “Diana” figure. [Fig. 82b] This figure, perhaps an allegory for beauty itself, strides forward, resting her hand against a beautifully wrought palm tree, a common symbol of resurgence and survival.<sup>347</sup> Roberts and Davidson have advanced the suggestion that this tree is the key to understanding a political interpretation of this print, referencing the uneasy state of the French monarchy in 1560, under the direction of Catherine de Medici as regent for her son, Charles IX.<sup>348</sup> The branches of this tree are home to two winged cupids, and a third flies above her, holding a frond. A dove, snail and rabbit nestle near her feet, and a peacock struts behind her. While potentially symbolizing love, cupidity, fecundity and vanity, the snail and peacock should especially be taken as a link to naturally occurring beauty in the real world, as should the flowers and other vegetation.<sup>349</sup> The transformation of the sky from deep night on the left to dawn on the right is itself a natural wonder that was so difficult to replicate in a picture, executed admirably by Ghisi in an engraving. *The Plight of the Artist* depicts the travails

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<sup>347</sup> Roberts, “Valois,” 418.

<sup>348</sup> Roberts, “Valois,” 418-20.

<sup>349</sup> For an in-depth discussion of this, see Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, *The Mastery of Nature : Aspects of Art, Science, and Humanism In the Renaissance* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993): 174-95.

demanding of one such as Ghisi, who drew from nature, antiquity and his imagination to create an artificial reality. No more relevant than here are Smith's observations concerning the emergence of naturalism "at moments of most intense artisanal self-assertion."<sup>350</sup>

Bartsch himself, arguably among the earliest commentators on this print, identified the male figure as a portrait of Michelangelo. Indeed, Ghisi would go on to create an engraved portrait of Michelangelo three years later on the occasion of his death in 1564. [Fig. 86] Such an identification is hardly necessary to support an interpretation of this print as a depiction of an artist specifically, but it could suggest that the print still retained this particular meaning in the time of Bartsch. Ghisi himself may even have included Raphael as the inventor in the inscription in order to encourage such an association: while searching out for the hand of Raphael in the design, one might look more closely and recognize that the creative process of this most celebrated master was being commemorated, rather than a design by Raphael as such. Ultimately, however, Ghisi may have been illuminating his own artistic career, complete with the challenges he faced in pursuing the objectives of his art.

By including his inscriptions, which work to draw in the viewer, Ghisi plays with the notions of authorship and animation. The inscription crediting Raphael as the inventor of the image has become artifice to the print. The artist, in this case, Ghisi, controls his metaphorical boat, deciding on the composition, references, and influences to be included in his own print. The giant arrow grasped by the "Diana" figure touches the ground, as if a burin might a copper plate at the first instant of creation; her hand poised as if it were

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<sup>350</sup> Smith, *Body*, 8.

holding the engraving tool. Ghisi ultimately controlled the creation of this print, and it seems as though it illustrates his own artistic plight.

While this print appears at first sight to be secular in subject, it could still be seen to relate to sixteenth-century theological debates concerning free will. As with Beham's *Impossible*, Ghisi's *Allegory* could also be taken as an exegesis on free will. According to Virgil's line, Theseus "sits and will sit forever," which is the hero's sentence of punishment for his hubris. However, Ghisi's figure strains forward to the beautiful female figure, encouraged by her line, which urges him to "come forward more bravely." According to Merback, an associate of Beham's brother-in-law suggested that the only way for "the human will to effectively participate in salvation is, paradoxically, the opposite of this curving into the self, saying that "this is the only way to salvation, namely, to lose oneself."<sup>351</sup> How lost Ghisi's male figure appears, tormented by horrific creatures, who surround him, and how well placed he is to participate in salvation.

A further visual element that might link Ghisi's print with the sixteenth-century discussions concerning free will could be the spark and line of light that stretches between the ground and the sky, behind the figure of the philosopher. [Fig. 82a] Denck's associate and Beham's brother-in-law, Sebastian Franck wrote in his 1534 *Paradoxa* that:

God placed into the human heart a model, spark, trace, light, and image of the kind and nature of his wisdom in which God may see himself. And this divine image and character scripture sometimes calls God's word, will, son, seed, hand, light, life, and truth in us. Thus we are capable of being like God and in some measure in this image we are of divine nature. The light has been kindled in the lamp or lantern of our heart and the treasure is already in the ground, placed into the ground of our soul, if we but let it burn and shine forth instead of preferring the lantern of the flesh. Indeed, anyone who turns into himself to look for this treasure, will find it not beyond the sea nor should he look for it in heaven; rather, the word, the

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<sup>351</sup> Merback, "Impossible," 1081 and 1092.

image of God, is in us.<sup>352</sup>

If indeed, Ghisi's spark is meant to be a reference to this spark of god, then it might be possible to see the print as an encouragement in favor of man's ability to propel oneself towards god. However, some Reformist theologians believed that the spark was only accessible when one resigned oneself to the will of god. According to Merback:

At the culmination of this tradition, Valentin Weigel (1533–88) wrote in *Von der Bekehrung des Menschen*: 'Man must bring forth sheer passivity, resignation, a surrendered will, a dying to self, and hold himself still. For as soon as man goes out of himself with his own will, just so soon does God enter with his will.' This radical conception of the Christian soul's rebirth as a kind of deification was hardly original to Weigel, but can be traced through the Spiritualist tradition and back further, into medieval mysticism. For Franck, *Gelassenheit* meant the hope of discovering the spark of God's light in one's own heart.<sup>353</sup>

Thus, if one were to consider Virgil's line about Theseus in this context, being made "to sit" may be less a punishment and more an opportunity to allow "God to enter with his will." In the same way the Beham's *Impossible* is a paradox, a "study of opposites," so too is Ghisi's print:

Instead, the inner word will be concealed behind visible signs that, like the flesh, point to false meanings — the same meanings given them by a corrupt world — to be deciphered. Only by 'judging according to the opposite,' Franck writes, will one discover the true spiritual meaning of things.<sup>354</sup>

Ghisi's messages embedded in this print might be taken as strictly secular, concerning the plight of the artist in his quest for creativity and beauty, or alternatively, as a consideration of the theological concerns of free will. His actual feelings about free will remain, more or less, ambiguous, possibly making the print still more appealing. While

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<sup>352</sup> Merback, "Impossible," 1085-6.

<sup>353</sup> Merback, "Impossible," 1087.

<sup>354</sup> Merback, "Impossible," 1088.

not a necessity, it is possible that Ghisi could have been familiar with Beham's *Impossible* and the many theological concerns embedded within it. Given that he spent at least a few years in Antwerp and that his Balkan archers in his *Martyrdom of St Barbara*, discussed below, came from a series that included prints by Beham may suggest that he knew this and other prints by the famous *Kleinmeister*.

A final layer of interpretation possible in this print might be seen to reflect the overarching theme of this chapter and the kernel of Ghisi's printed corpus, that of re-animation. The spark that might reflect Ghisi's inclusion of the debate concerning free will, might also be taken on a less religious level, instead representing the spark of creativity experienced by an artist in the process of invention. Ghisi was responsible for the creation of this print, its composition and the amalgamation of these various, highly naturalistic creatures, who seem to torment the philosopher/theologian/artist. It was also he who selected and arranged Virgil's quotes, re-animating them with new meaning in this complicated tableau.

At around the time of his making this print, Ghisi appears to have been in or around Paris. However, it does not bear the French Royal Privilege, as does his *Calumny of Apelles* from a year before. [Fig. 62] While Roberts and Davidson may be correct in their suggestion that the print bears relevance to Catherine de Medici and the uneasy succession of the Valois monarchy, this print was not necessarily made only for a French audience, and was, it would seem, intended, at least on some level, for a Mantuan, even Gonzaga, audience. The very specific medallion references to late Ferrante and his daughter, Ippolita, are extremely precise and may have been an attempt by Ghisi to seek Gonzaga favor, and possibly, an opportunity to return home to Mantua. What better way

to demonstrate his artistic skill and knowledge than through this particular print, revealing the imaginings of his creative mind and process?

### **Re-Animating St Barbara**

One of his final projects, made at the behest of the Gonzaga, was to design and engrave four missal illustrations to celebrate the completion of the church of Santa Barbara, the project with which Duke Guglielmo Gonzaga was preoccupied, and on which Bertani had worked for many years.<sup>355</sup> The subjects of these four illustrations were the *Crucifixion*, the *Adoration of the Shepherds*, the *Resurrection* and the *Martyrdom of St Barbara*. [Figs. 87-90] Of special interest in this missal is Ghisi's engraved illustration of the *Martyrdom of St Barbara*, a complex and sophisticated print that demonstrates Ghisi's resourcefulness as an artist, both in his own creative process, and also in the engraving of a great many other artists' works. [Fig. 90] The subject of this print likely resonated with Ghisi in a number of different ways. At the end of his life, Ghisi may have been reflecting on the trajectory of his career, aware of the sacrifices that he made throughout his life, while simultaneously celebrating his artistic power of re-animation. In this illustration, he has re-animated St Barbara in a quasi sixteenth-century setting only to see her martyred again.

The missal intended to include the *Martyrdom of St Barbara* was published in 1583, one year after Ghisi's death, and dedicated to Pope Gregory XIII.<sup>356</sup> However, the one surviving copy of this missal in Mantua, now in the Archivio Storico Diocesano,

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<sup>355</sup> Tiziana Gozzi, "La basilica palatine di Santa Barbara in Mantova," *Atti e memorie della Accademia Virgiliana di Mantova*, 42 (1974): 3-91; Piera Giovanna Tordella, "Giovann Battista Bertani. Miti classici e rivisitazioni giuliesche in disegni per committenze ducali mantovane," *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz*, 42 (1998): 311-357; Barbara Furlotti and Guido Rebecchini, *The Art of Mantua: Power and Patronage In the Renaissance* (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2008): 200-17.

<sup>356</sup> Bellini, *Ghisi*, 271; Boorsch, *Ghisi*, 195.



appears to have had Ghisi's four illustrations removed (if they were ever included).<sup>357</sup>

The four illustrations were definitely included in the missal published in 1693 in Venice.<sup>358</sup> Unusually, the plates for the missal were not retained by Ghisi, or one of the Scultori, as was typical for his plates, but were instead held in the Palazzo Ducale, afterwards, in 1928, transferring to the Palazzo Te, where they are still housed today.<sup>359</sup>

The *Crucifixion* and the *Adoration of the Shepherds* appear to have been designs of Ghisi's own invention, while the *Resurrection* takes inspiration from a design by Giovanni Battista Scultori and a drawing by Giulio Romano.<sup>360</sup> The *Martyrdom of Santa Barbara* relates to a painting from the church of Santa Barbara, which according to Vasari, was painted by Domenico Brusascorci, after a design, now lost by Bertani, likely a closer match to Ghisi's print.<sup>361</sup> Brusascorci's painting still survives in Santa Barbara, albeit with a new eighteenth-century lunette, while the old lunette was moved into another chapel of the church and has recently been restored.<sup>362</sup> [Fig. 91] Bertani as designer of the original painting of the *Martyrdom of Santa Barbara* is mentioned in a letter to the Duke on October 5, 1564.<sup>363</sup> Each of these four prints is signed simply with Ghisi's monogram: "G MF," short for "Ghisi Mantuanus Fecit".

In his print, Ghisi changed the *Martyrdom of Santa Barbara* significantly from the original painting, executed by Brusascorci. Ghisi has maintained the three horizontal zones in the painting, but has filled out the print considerably, adding a significant

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<sup>357</sup> Boorsch, *Ghisi*, 197, n. 4.

<sup>358</sup> Boorsch, *Ghisi*, 197; Licia Mari, "Two Lunettes for the Altarpiece in the Palace Basilica of Santa Barbara in Mantua," *Music in Art*, 33 (2008): 112-122.

<sup>359</sup> Bellini, *Ghisi*, 272; Boorsch, *Ghisi*, 203.

<sup>360</sup> Boorsch, *Ghisi*, 201.

<sup>361</sup> Vasari, *Lives*, I, 641; Bellini, *Ghisi*, 271-2; Boorsch, *Ghisi*, 203; Mari, "Two," 113. On Brusascorci, see Geraldine Alice Wojno, "Domenico Brusasorzi and Veronese Painting," B.A. Thesis (Kent State University, 1973).

<sup>362</sup> Mari, "Two," 113.

<sup>363</sup> Bellini, *Ghisi*, 488; Boorsch, *Ghisi*, 203.

number of additional spectators. In the fresco, the four female spectators to the left of the composition and the three male spectators to the right are dressed in classicizing costumes, with the executioner, Barbara's father, Dioscorus, dressed in the same manner and wearing a floor-length cape tied over his left shoulder. Conversely, in Ghisi's print, there are a few female spectators wearing classicizing robes to the left, with a soldier wearing a cuirass, who points out the execution to a large group of men dressed in seemingly contemporary sixteenth-century dress. Dioscorus too wears a contemporary outfit, cloak and a distinct hat.

The clothing of St Barbara's executioner and his supporters, and specifically, their hats, almost certainly mimics the contemporary dress of Balkan Turks, images of whom Ghisi discovered through contemporary prints. According to legend, St Barbara was martyred in Nicodemia, (modern day Izmit, Turkey), in an area adjacent to the Balkan peninsula. Ghisi appears to have sought out clothing appropriate to Balkan Turkey, giving his print a historical grounding not hitherto seen in Italian images of St. Barbara's martyrdom.

One possible source for these details could be in the prints made depicting the Siege of Vienna by Ottoman Turks in 1529. Niklas Stoer made a print of a Balkan Archer for the so-called "Besiegers of Vienna" Series, which consisted of 15 woodcuts, issued by Hans Guldenmund in Nuremberg. [Fig. 92] Of these woodcuts, seven are by Stoer, five are by Schoen, and three are by Hans Sebald Beham.<sup>364</sup> These same hats can also be

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<sup>364</sup> All of these woodcuts bear verses by Hans Sachs. (Walter L. Strauss, *The Illustrated Bartsch: German Masters of the Sixteenth Century: Erhard Schoen and Niklas Stoer*, 13, (New York: Abaris Books, 1984): 619-20, B. 1302.45 (d). On Schoen and Stoer, see Heinrich Röttinger, *Erhard Schön und Niklas Stör, der Pseudo-Schön: zwei Untersuchungen zur Geschichte des alten Nürnberger Holzschnittes* (Strassburg: Heitz, 1925). On Schoen, see F. W. H. Hollstein, *German Engravings, Etchings, and Woodcuts, Ca. 1400-1700* (Amsterdam: M. Hertzberger, 1954): vol. 47. On Beham, see F. W. H. Hollstein, *German Engravings, Etchings, and Woodcuts, Ca. 1400-1700* (Amsterdam: M. Hertzberger, 1954): vol. 3. See also Stephen H.

seen in *Three Turkish Musicians*, dated 1530, by Erhard Schoen, which includes three different musicians on horseback, each wearing a different type of Turkish hat, with the central figure wearing the same hat as in Ghisi's print. [Fig. 93] Schoen's print is based on a slightly earlier print of the same subject by Jan Swart van Groningen.<sup>365</sup> [Fig. 94] Schoen himself produced at least three prints showing the Martyrdom of St Barbara, but only one of these includes similar hats. His latest, from circa 1525, show her assailants in a combination of turbans, helmets for the soldiers and hats similar to those in Ghisi's print. [Fig. 95] Ghisi's decision to dress his spectators in Turkish, and specifically, Balkan garb testifies to his desire to produce an effect of contemporary detail.

The division between Turkish spectators and those in classicizing attire within the print is, at first sight, puzzling. However, on close inspection, it would appear that the "classical" spectators watch in horror, protesting against the martyrdom, while the "Turkish" spectators appear to look on dispassionately. The classical spectators at the left can be taken as representatives of the West, while the Turkish onlookers represent the menacing East. The three nude figures who sit on the hillside at the upper left of the print, appear also to be watching and commenting on the execution about to take place, perhaps representing the two shepherds from the legend, one of whom protected the saint from her pursuing father, while the second of whom betrayed her and was turned to stone. However, if indeed these youths are meant to represent the shepherds, then Ghisi is conflating two distinct moments within the narrative.

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Goddard, et al. *The World In Miniature: Engravings by the German Little Masters, 1500-1550* (Lawrence: Spencer Museum of Art, 1988). On the multiple interpretations possible in one of Beham's prints, see Merback, "Impossible," 1037-1105.

<sup>365</sup> Walter L. Strauss, *The Illustrated Bartsch: German Masters of the Sixteenth Century: Erhard Schoen and Niklas Stoer*, 13, (New York: Abaris Books, 1984): 619-20, B. 1301.239.

The choir and orchestra of angels in the upper register of the print have been greatly expanded from the original lunette, playing all variety of instruments, including the organ. Their cloudbank lifts up at the center of the print, directly above the figure of Barbara, revealing bright rays of light, representing the presence of God. These rays of light perhaps foreshadow the bolts of lightening that will soon smite Dioscorus, after his sinful task is done.

More so than in the fresco, Ghisi's print uses Raphael's *Transfiguration* as a subtle touchstone for its composition. [Fig. 96] The female figure at the lower left, who sits twisted with her back to the viewer is reminiscent of the female figure at lower right in Raphael's design, itself derived from Michelangelo's *Libyan Sibyl* from the Sistine ceiling. [Fig. 97] Like Adamo, and most probably working from the same drawn sources, Ghisi was certainly familiar with Michelangelo's work, given that he executed a number of prints after the Sistine ceiling (although not after the *Libyan Sibyl*), as well as a magnificent print after the *Last Judgment*, one of the few engravings after Michelangelo to elicit praise from Vasari.<sup>366</sup> The circular jutting of the rocky outcrop on which Barbara and her father stand is far more reminiscent of Raphael's design than the Brusascorci painting. However, where Ghisi's prints usually feature resplendent landscape in his backgrounds, only a few trees populate the space behind the three nude youths. Instead of creating a far off country and city-scape, as is typical, Ghisi has focused his attention on filling the space with his hordes of angels and spectators.

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<sup>366</sup> Gregory, *Vasari*, 313. This was likely the print noted in the collection of Silvio Calandra, who in 1590 is noted as having a print after Michelangelo's *Last Judgment*, possibly that engraved by Giorgio Ghisi. Rebecchini, *Private*, 168-9.

Thus, Ghisi's *Martyrdom*, a late print in his corpus, possibly even his last, is a conflation of many different artistic sources, taken from prints and paintings, some more obscure and others famous. Dioscorus' sword, which is not a curved Turkish *scimitar*, is more similar to a Turkish *yataghan*. The *yataghan* is a short sabre sword, which often has a curved sword pommel, such as the one in Ghisi's print.<sup>367</sup> A comparative sword can be found in the collection of the British Museum, which is actually a late seventeenth-century German copy of a Turkish *yataghan*. [Fig. 98] While Ghisi may have found inspiration for the sword in print, it is also possible that he found a model in the Gonzaga armory, which according to an inventory in 1542, contained a great many pieces of Turkish weaponry, including swords, bows and arrows and other specimens.<sup>368</sup>

The beautiful sword in the *Martyrdom of St Barbara* refers to the other artistic production for which Ghisi was known. According to Bertani, Ghisi was "a man truly rare in today's world at engraving plates and at damascening of the most varied kind..."<sup>369</sup> Only two surviving damascened works can be identified as being by Ghisi: a shield and a sword, both of which are signed. However, Bertani's reference suggests that Ghisi may have made more damascened arms that no longer survive. The best known of these works is the so-called Ghisi, or Demidoff Shield, in the British Museum.<sup>370</sup> [Fig. 99] The shield is considered to be a parade shield, so it was not intended for use in battle,

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<sup>367</sup> George C. Miles, "Turkish Pala "Sword" and Its Derivatives," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 50 (1930): 254.

<sup>368</sup> A letter from 8 November, 1581 from Ghisi to Marcello Donati, secretary to the Duke, attests to Ghisi's access to the Gonzaga armory, when he was asked to gather up arrows. Boorsch, *Ghisi*, 227-8; On the Armory, see J. G. Mann, "The Lost Armory of the Gonzagas," *The Archaeological Journal*, 95 (1938): 285-321.

<sup>369</sup> "insieme con messer Giorgio Ghisi Mantouano, huomo veramente hoggidi raro al mondo, in tagliar rami, lavorare alla Azamina di più varie sorti." Giovanni Battista Bertani, *Gli oscuri et difficili passi dell'opera ionica di Vitruvio*, Mantua, 1558, EV recto. Translation in Boorsch, *Ghisi*, 15.

<sup>370</sup> The shield was a gift from Baron Ferdinand Anselm de Rothschild, as part of the Waddesdon Bequest in 1895. (Inv. No. WB.5) Charles Hercules Read, *The Waddesdon Bequest. Catalogue of the Works of Art Bequeathed to the British Museum by Baron Ferdinand Rothschild, M.P.*, 1898, London, 1902.

but instead would have been displayed on triumphal occasions. It is signed and dated with the inscription: “GIORGIVS DE GHISYS MNTVANZ FA M.D.LIII”, a variant signature that expands on the abbreviated format found on many of Ghisi’s prints, where he typically signed with a simple “GMF” or “Giorgio Mantuanus Fecit”. The importance of this particular project may well have incited him to use a more formal signature.

The shield is damascened with gold and partly plated with silver, featuring a scene of three horsemen engaged in combat, within a round frame on which sits a male and female warrior. At the cardinal points of the shield are four ovoid frames containing female figures representing Glory, Fame, Strength and Prudence. Each of these frames features minute subjects, such as cityscapes and warriors on horseback taken from the *Iliad* and ancient mythology, all of which are inlaid in gold. Amongst the frames hang fruit festoons, with two parrot-like birds and two satyrs.

The second known piece of arms by Ghisi is a sword, most recently in the collection of the National Museum, Budapest and which appeared to feature a design with various figures and minute scenes.<sup>371</sup> [Fig. 100] It was signed “GIORGIUS GHISI MAN F.” Unfortunately, little else is known about the sword, as it appears to have been lost since it was published and photographed in 1888, and cannot be located by the National Museum. The patrons for these two damascened projects is unknown, however, their very survival attests to Ghisi’s impressive skill working in this medium.<sup>372</sup>

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<sup>371</sup> Bellini, *Ghisi*, 24; Boorsch, *Ghisi*, 19, 29, n. 19; Carl von Pulszky, *Chefs-d’oeuvre d’orfèvrerie ayant figure à l’exposition de Budapest*, (Paris: A. Lévy, 1888): Vol. II, 85; Mann, “Armory,” 246.

<sup>372</sup> The process of damascene consists of applying a metal inlay to a metal base, which in the case of the two shields above was gold and silver on iron. To begin the process, Ghisi would have drawn on the iron, essentially working in the same way as if he were creating an engraving, even using identical tools, such as burins. He would have inserted gold and silver wire into the inscribed grooves, after which the entire surface would have been smoothed and polished. Antonella Fuga, *Artists Techniques’ and Materials* (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2006): 358.

In the *Martyrdom of St Barbara*, it would seem that Ghisi includes the sword as an ironical reference to the act of creation, that of Ghisi “cutting” the plate, held by Barbara’s own literal creator, her father. Ghisi is the creator of the sword in the print, bringing to life a story about death, martyrdom and rebirth in heaven. The sword is potent, but must be held in the right hands. This magnificent engraving, made by Ghisi in the service of the Duke, could be taken as a swansong for the artist’s life work, given that it represents not only a number of other artists who formed Ghisi’s artistic geneology, but is also a testament to the power of Ghisi’s other skills, including those in the making of arms. The theme of sacrifice and martyrdom resonates with the potentially disappointing circumstances that faced Ghisi in the final years of his life.

### **Conclusion: Continual Re-Animation**

On 8 November, 1581, just over a year before his death, Ghisi sent a letter to Marcello Donati, secretary to Duke Guglielmo Gonzaga. In it, Ghisi complains that he can no longer go to the market square, owing to all the creditors who surround him as soon as he appears.<sup>373</sup> It is implied that the debts have been accrued on projects for the Ducal family. In a letter dated 19 December, 1581, also to Donati, Ghisi says he will send along a list of creditors, so that Donati can broach the subject of repayment with the Duke.<sup>374</sup> Further letters attest to Ghisi’s constant requests for payment, materials and reimbursement for his own funds, expended on Ducal projects. It is reasonable to conclude that this was not quite the stable position that Ghisi had in mind when he became a salaried court artist to the Gonzaga at the end of his life.

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<sup>373</sup> Boorsch, *Ghisi*, 228; Archivio di Stato, Archivio Gonzaga, Busta 2615.

<sup>374</sup> Boorsch, *Ghisi*, 228; Archivio di Stato, Archivio Gonzaga, Busta 2615.

The objective of this chapter was to demonstrate that, contrary to Landau's previous observation, Ghisi was deeply imaginative not only in the way in which he reproduced his colleagues' designs, but also worked to imbue his prints with multiple meanings not possible in the designs from which he worked. Considering Landau's observation, perhaps it is likely not that the Gonzaga failed to admire his engraving style, but simply failed to understand the cleverness with which he approached his art. As with the Scultori, and Giovanni Battista especially, printmaking for Ghisi was ultimately a non-institutional practice. He did not necessarily require the approval of the Gonzaga in order to make his prints. He did, however, require patrons such as the Ducal family to support him in his work with precious metals.

Throughout his career, Ghisi appears to have consistently returned to the theme of "re-animation," considering the way in which an artist might take on the role of God in the act of artistic creation. His continued exploration of this relatively hubristic role-playing should be considered all the more successful given that he was able to explore this whilst in the act of, largely, "reproducing" the work of others. His prints, especially those discussed above, should be seen as an attempt by Ghisi to demonstrate his own artistic mastery. Further, his addition of narrative captions, such as those in the *Allegory* and the *Vision of Ezekiel*, extremely creative backgrounds, and other details, should be recognized as his own contributions to the artistic process, and his attempts to demonstrate his power.

There can be little doubt that Ghisi truly was a remarkable engraver in terms of his technical abilities, but also in the way that he adapted various sources to suit his projects, and finally, in his ongoing proposal of printmaking as a sculptural art. While he



used preceding printmakers such as Marcantonio Raimondi and his own teacher, Giovanni Battista, regularly as a technical or design touchstone, he fully took on these sources and adapted them rigorously. He certainly did not use Marcantonio in the same way that his contemporary, Adamo Scultori, did, that is by explicitly copying Marcantonio prints as part of his early training exercises. Instead, like Beham's before him, Ghisi's references to his predecessors were much more subtle and clever, and ultimately for a different purpose. Ghisi was adopting the known visual print language, which he then subsumed and transformed.

As Ghisi developed relationships with painters after whose work he created prints, comparisons between the surviving "original" work and his engravings, demonstrate that he was allowed a fair amount of creative license in a number of his projects. Many of his collaborators, such as Bertani and Teodoro, seem to have trusted him with the translation process from paint or drawing to print. In fact, he seems to have learned much from these collaborators, exploring how to use painterly techniques, such as shading, to his advantage in the print medium.

Little can be said decisively about the collectors of Ghisi's prints, but it is at least possible to identify one Mantuan collector of his engravings. In 1590, Silvio Calandra, an eminent Mantuan who wrote a now lost literary work on the legend of the Argonauts, is noted as having a print after Michelangelo's *Last Judgment*, probably that engraved by Giorgio Ghisi.<sup>375</sup> About 30 years before, as noted in correspondence, Calandra lent this magnificent print to an artist and Gonzaga agent in Venice, Domenico Molino, demonstrating the importance this particular print held for collectors and artists alike.

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<sup>375</sup> Rebecchini, *Private*, 168-9.

Finally, Ghisi appears to have felt strongly about the identification of engraving as a three-dimensional work of art; a type of sculpture. While this sentiment may well have its roots in his damascene work with armor, sadly exemplified by only two surviving works, Ghisi pushed his abilities so that he might participate in the ongoing *paragone* between the arts, “sculpting” the ancient Hercules Farnese, among others. By sculpting the figures in his prints, he breathed new life into these mythical heroes and religious martyrs. Both his *Vision of Ezekiel* and *Allegory of Life*, among many other works, attest to his interest in exploring the potential of artistic power, and ultimately, engraving as a tool of animation.

#### **Chapter 4: A Privileged Initiate: Diana Scultori's Learned Letters**

“Procul este Prophani” are the words that adorn a modest tablet tucked into the pergola of Diana Scultori's (1547-1612) most impressive print, commonly called *The Feast of the Gods*, dated 1 September, 1575. [Fig. 101 and 101a] The Latin phrase, which literally means “Outside is profane,” and which could be taken as a warning to “keep your distance, you uninitiated,” is a caveat that could be attached to so many of Diana's prints. In this particular instance, the phrase acts as a challenge to the viewer. Given that her corpus is classified as “reproductive” and her sources are identified as “lost drawings,” as has so frequently been the case, it is a challenge to the viewer to recognize her original contribution to this composition. Indeed, it is a challenge that she herself sets: identify the differences between the “original” source and her version so often embellished with additional landscape, figures and text. While the visual changes may result from a need to accommodate a composition within a print matrix, the texts included increasingly become a hallmark of her prints, seemingly added in order to emphasize her claim to learning and lend the subjects of her prints a sixteenth-century relevance.

*The Feast of the Gods*, a large print measuring 14.8 by 44.3 inches, is Diana's conflation of multiple parts of the frescos from the Sala di Psiche, made after Giulio Romano's designs for the room in the Palazzo Te, painted no later than 1530 by Giovanni Francesco Penni and Rinaldo Mantovano.<sup>376</sup> [Fig. 102] Diana credits Giulio Romano in

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<sup>376</sup> About this print, Francesco Peranda wrote in a letter to Diana's husband that, “that banquet of the Gods is a stupendous thing; so much so that I, who had the highest opinion of her, remain overwhelmed by her merit, and I confess to having underestimated her (quel convivio dei Dei è cosa stupenda; tal che io, che tenevo grandissima opinione di lei [Diana] resto superato del valor suo, et confesso, che ne portavo concetto inferiore al merito: see G.F. Peranda, “Lettere del Signor Giovanni Francesco Peranda” (Venice: Barezzi Barezzi, 1621): 106-107; Pagani, “Review,” 82 dates it to June 1578). Translated and cited in Bury, *Print*, 107.

her signature line, inscribing “Iulius Rom. Inventor. Diana F.” on a tablet above a door at the far left. Diana made the print in three plates, covering the impressive expanse of half of one wall of the room, conflated together with elements from two other walls in the room. Instead of being an accurate depiction of the frescos, Diana’s print is a pastiche of the frescos, with key elements eliminated and others added. Even within the parts of the print that appear to follow the fresco closely, there are significant alterations, especially in the placement of figures and in the backgrounds.

Likely as a token of thanks, Diana dedicated the print to Claudio Gonzaga, about whom little is known and who appears to have facilitated the granting of a Papal privilege in the same year, noting:

It is appropriate that this work of mine, having been received under the aegis of your most excellent house should be received again under your most illustrious name, now that it has come into the light of your favour, with the generous privilege of our lord. Receive this with benign spirit, and with it the service of my household in Rome on the first of September 1575.<sup>377</sup>

Indeed, the subject made a handsome gift, after one of Mantua’s most beloved artists, displaying a happy scene of celebration, rich with references to material wealth and prosperity. However, instead of copying the frescos exactly, Diana copied particular elements while altering others to present a transformed cohesive picture, in part telling a different story than that in the original fresco. While some may conclude that Diana was working from a flawed record of the fresco, perhaps confusing the sequence of drawings from which she was working, it seems much more likely that Diana sought to re-present

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<sup>377</sup> “E cosa conueniente che questa mia fatica hauendo riceuuto l’essere’ sotto il dominio dell’e’cellma casa uostra receua ancora il ben essere sotto il nome’ di u.s. Ill.ma poiche hora ella uiene’ in luce fauorita da lei con l’amplissimo Privilegio della s.ta di Nostro Sig.r Riceuila dunche con benigno animo et con essa la seruiti di casa mia Di Roma il di primo di Settembre MDLXXV.” Lincoln, *Invention*, 129.

the material, not as a reproductive record of the walls, perhaps familiar to Claudio, but instead in a reimagined and fresh arrangement of material.<sup>378</sup>

Some of the alterations within the composition were clearly made to better accommodate the figures within the confines of a print.<sup>379</sup> However, the more significant changes and omissions could be due to more engaging reasons. In her lengthy dedication, Diana asks that Claudio receive the work again (the Gonzaga household having received it once already in the Palazzo Te), but she does not make explicit mention of the alterations she has made to the original design. Instead the reason for Diana's significant modifications lies in the above-mentioned Latin inscription. The

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<sup>378</sup> On the subject of the source for this print, Michael Bury observes: "The best explanation would seem to be that of Boorsch and Lewis, that there was a common source for both [Battista] Franco's and Diana's prints (Boorsch and Lewis, cat. 2). Both differ considerably from the frescoes; for example in the omission of the scene of Cupid and Psyche on their marriage bed. But both come close to early ideas of Giulio himself. Two of his preliminary drawings, now at Chatsworth (Jaffè nos 209-210) show many features that relate to the engravings and not to the frescoes. However it seems unlikely that Giulio himself had developed his initial ideas so as to provide a direct source for the prints (Gere and Pouncey, cat.144)." In *The Print in Italy: 1560-1620* (London: British Museum Press, 2001): 107. Paolo Bellini recommends that she may have had access to a drawing of the portion depicting Mars and Venus, which was referenced by d'Arco, as well as a second drawing in the collection of Pietro Monaldi of Perugia, and two more drawings, now in the Devonshire Collection at Devonshire (Inv. No. 96 and 97). *Scultori*, 202.

<sup>379</sup> For example, the serpent whose tail winds around the feet of the seated Apollo, continues into the forward space within the print, offering a point of interest for the viewer in that relatively uninteresting foreground. The figure to the left of the credenza blocks the trunk of the elephant with the sack he carries, whereas in the fresco, the trunk hangs to the left of the figure. Perhaps this was an oversight and an issue of space, or even a technical mistake made by Diana. The left half of the print, up to the inclusion of Papisilenus on his chair carried by a ram, is not so different from the fresco, except in the background and minor changes mentioned above (the serpent at the feet of Apollo and the trunk of the elephant). However, underneath Papisilenus in the print, reclines a river goddess who Diana has transplanted from the left side of the west wall. Next to Papisilenus, Diana has inserted a group of women and children attendants also from the west wall, along with a satyr serving a nude woman with her back to the viewer. Diana has truncated the table, missing out the other half of revelers, and instead included the approaching Hermes, who is from the far right of the west wall. Finally, Diana has included a reverse of Venus and Mars bathing, which is on the left side of the north wall. Diana has unified the scene in the print with the pergola that originates in the fresco above the table on the west wall, but which she has extended to work around the pergola over the credenza from the south wall. She has also taken care to include the putti musical troupe, who overlook the west wall table, but she has added a flute player. In attendance around the table are three additional older women, and the child who supports a large basket of fruit has been replaced by a child holding a much more shallow basket. In the pergola behind this group, Diana has included not only the original shrub of roses, but she has added garlands of laurel, wrapped in ribbon that are reminiscent of banderoles.

Greek and Latin text on the two tablets hanging prominently from the pergola in the print do not occur in the original fresco. They read: “ΣΥΜΠΟΣΙΟΝ ΤΟΥΤ' ΕΣΤΙ ΘΕΟΝ” (The Feast of the Gods) and “Procul este Prophani” (Outside is profane). The tablets appear to explain the subject matter, and to some, its multi-faceted interpretation. The Latin phrase, “Procul este Prophani” is often associated not with Apuleius, who recounts the tale of Cupid and Psyche in his *Golden Ass*, but instead with Virgil, a son of Mantua, whose Cumaen Sybil in the *Aeneid* utters these words to Apollo and Aeneas as warning before they enter the realm of Hades, as if to say “Keep your distance, you uninitiated.” Indeed, only one “initiated” into the Gonzaga court and familiar with the Palazzo Te and the work of Giulio Romano, could rise to Diana’s challenge. However, the phrase also held significance in Papal Rome: the phrase decorated the door into Bramante’s Cortile del Belvedere.<sup>380</sup> Thus, Diana and her dedicatee, as Mantuans in Rome, were doubly initiated.

With Diana’s alterations to the composition, the subject of the print shifts away from the story of Cupid and Psyche, and rather, depicts a feast of the gods. Instead of including Cupid and Psyche in their marriage bed with their progeny, Voluptas, Diana has included Venus and Mars bathing. Thus, the focus is shifted from a celebration of love, beauty and ultimately, pleasure, to a depiction of the heavens at peace.<sup>381</sup> Despite including the goddess of love, Diana has effectively de-sexualized the scene, shifting the focus to that of a feast. While not drastically different, Mars and Venus here could take on a valence not possible in the original fresco. The scene of Mars and Venus bathing

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<sup>380</sup> George L. Hersey, *High Renaissance Art In St. Peter's and the Vatican: an Interpretive Guide* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993): 109.

<sup>381</sup> Lincoln takes this substitution as an attempt to make it a “more decorous engraving,” noting that the third including Mars and Venus could be detached and the print of the feast would be unaffected. Lincoln, *Invention*, 132.

appears to have been intentionally reversed from the fresco, possibly for aesthetic reasons. While it may make more sense to have Mars point to the banquet, rather than away, as he does in the print, the pyramid composition of the couple attended by putti acts as a successful bookend to the print.<sup>382</sup> With Mars pointing away from the jovial scene, he reinforces the principle that feasting and celebration are activities belonging to peaceful times and, even then, one available only to those initiated.

Diana has added her own more detailed background behind the couple, most obviously, the tree that sprouts at the far right of the print and grows over the rocky outcrop and seems almost to intertwine with a separate tree, on which branches a dove rests, creating an extension to the pergola in the central part of the scene. This pergola further reinforces the theme of initiation: Hermes walks through an opening in the pergola, a doorway, into the feast. Hermes is, it would seem, an initiate. [Fig. 101b]

These significant alterations, which include the insertion of Mars and Venus, the extension of the pergola and the conflation of different elements, were very deliberate and meaningful. The integration of the different parts was executed with much care, both technically and with an eye towards the final composition. It is highly unlikely that this print resulted solely from a misleading record of the original fresco. This conclusion is further supported by the print that Diana's close contemporary, Giorgio Ghisi, made after the individual scene of Cupid and Psyche in bed with Voluptas. If he had access to a drawing of the scene, then it would seem possible for Diana also to have had access to the same drawing. Bellini suggests Diana did not wish to replicate (and thus be in

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<sup>382</sup> While the number of figures in the bathing scene remain the same in the print, Diana has moved Mars's helmet, so that it hangs on the branch of the tree at the far right, instead of resting on the ground as it does in the fresco.

competition with) Ghisi's print, published just one year before.<sup>383</sup> In fact, Diana's print probably pre-dated that by Ghisi, given that it already existed in some form when she made an application for a Papal privilege earlier in the year.<sup>384</sup> Battista Franco also made an earlier print after the design, and it was this print that informed Vasari's description of the room in his 1568 edition of the *Vite*.<sup>385</sup> Only one familiar with the room and Vasari's account would note this, perhaps inspiring Diana to make her own changes. While Ghisi and Franco's print may have been a factor in Diana's decision to switch Cupid and Psyche for Mars and Venus, this does not explain the other significant alterations that she made, and it would appear instead that she was, in essence, changing the subject of the print.<sup>386</sup> Ghisi himself did this in some of his prints, including most dramatically in his version of Raphael's *School of Athens*, which he radically transformed into the *Acts of the Apostles*.<sup>387</sup>

Diana's reasons for making such significant changes lie both in the Latin tablet and also, to a degree, in her dedication to Claudio. By altering the print so that it became a scene of feasting, rather than lovemaking, Diana was altering the function of the print, making it more appropriate for her dedicatee, a man of the church. Scenes of feasting were not unfamiliar to godly men, so often appearing in a sacred context depicting the celebrations of the marriage at Cana, and the feast in the house of Levi. In order to aid in an additional reading of the print, Diana relied not only on the alterations that she made to the original composition, but also on the inclusion of the texts, which she utilized to

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<sup>383</sup> Bellini, *Scultori*, 202.

<sup>384</sup> Just under half of Diana's prints carry a date, and as a result, it can be difficult to organize her prints chronologically. A chronology is further complicated by her various signatures.

<sup>385</sup> Gregory, *Vasari*, 144.

<sup>386</sup> Lincoln, *Invention*, 132.

<sup>387</sup> Bury, "Engravings," 4-19.



clarify the image. Finally, she was demonstrating her great ability to play with the original material designed by Giulio Romano, Mantua's (and Rome's) artistic master, and "re-present," making new artistic material from a famous work that had already been made for Claudio's family.

Relatively little is known about the dedicatee himself, Claudio Gonzaga.<sup>388</sup> By 1565, he appears to have been working as an apostolic proto-notary and agent for Cardinal Giulio della Rovere.<sup>389</sup> He became the majordomo to Pope Gregory XIII (from 1572-1585), a position that appears to have allowed him the opportunity to facilitate the granting of a Papal privilege on Diana's behalf.<sup>390</sup> A stupendous feat of engraving, this particular print would have been a fine expression of gratitude for Claudio's assistance. This print at once calls attention to Diana's artistic genealogy, while at the same time appearing to display her ability to manipulate another artist's material. Such a formula should recall the work of Diana's father, Giovanni Battista, especially his *David and Goliath*, also taken from a design of Giulio Romano at the Palazzo Te. Ultimately, Diana is demonstrating her own initiation into, not only, the Gonzaga and Papal courts, but also the art of printmaking itself.

### **"Gracious and Gentle": Diana's printmaking roots**

Diana's life and corpus has been the subject of considerable scholarly attention. In d'Arco's *Cinque valenti incisori Mantovani del secolo XVI e delle stampe da loro*

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<sup>388</sup> Claudio does not appear to have been a particularly important member of the Gonzaga family. He is not included in the family tree made by David Chambers for his essay, "Mantua and the Gonzaga," in *Splendours of the Gonzaga*, exh. cat. edited by David Chambers and Jane Martineau (Milan: Cinisello B., 1981): XVIII and XIX. The most telling references concerning Claudio's life appear in letters, including that from Gio. Francesco Peranda cited above and in a series of letters related to his work for Cardinal Giulio della Rovere (Sabine Eiche, "Cardinal Giulio della Rovere and the Vigna Carpi," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 45, (1986): 118.

<sup>389</sup> Eiche, "Cardinal", 118.

<sup>390</sup> Evelyn Lincoln, "Making a Good Impression. Diana Mantuana's Roman Printmaking Career," *Renaissance Quarterly*, 50 (1997): 1126; Lincoln, *Invention*, 128-9.

operate from 1840, he devoted nine pages to her life and works, laying out the basic biographical details, including the way in which she likely met her husband, and listed all known engravings, numbering 37 at that time.<sup>391</sup> More recently, the prints of Diana and Adamo have been the subject of a catalogue written by Bellini about Adamo and Diana, who ably produced a timeline of her life, and examined 63 of her prints, discussing the various known and unknown states and source materials for each of the prints.<sup>392</sup> In 1993, Massari considered Diana's prints as they relate to original material by Giulio Romano.<sup>393</sup> Because the focus of her study was Giulio, Massari, as with Giovanni Battista, Adamo and Giorgio Ghisi, was eager to relate nearly every work not clearly identified as the design of another artist as based on a work of Giulio's. While she may, in fact, be accurate in these assumptions, her view is dismissive of any contributions that Diana herself may have made. Evelyn Lincoln examined Diana and her *milieu* in her larger study, *The Invention of the Italian Renaissance Printmaker*, presenting the effect of Diana's Papal privilege on her work and the way in which Diana shaped her artistic identity.<sup>394</sup> Finally, Valeria Pagani has published a number of documents relating to Diana's life in Rome, all of which contribute significantly to a greater understanding of her career.<sup>395</sup> While this scholarship is thorough and for the most part, extremely accurate, it largely fails to account for Diana's own creative inventions and contributions in her printmaking endeavors. Further, as with the scholarship on her father and Ghisi,

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<sup>391</sup> d'Arco, *Cinque*, 27-36, 72-86.

<sup>392</sup> Bellini, *Scultori*. Bellini expanded on and corrected a brief catalogue, prepared by Gioconda Albricci, "Le incisioni di Diana Scultori," *I quaderno del conoscitore di stampe*, 25 (1975): 17-23.

<sup>393</sup> Massari, *Giulio*, 141-166.

<sup>394</sup> Lincoln, *Invention*, 111-145. The book echoes Lincoln's analysis in an article: Lincoln, "Impression," 1101-47.

<sup>395</sup> Valeria Pagani, "A Lunario for the years 1584-1586 by Francesco da Volterra and Diana Mantovano." *Print Quarterly*, 8 (1991): 140-5; "Review," 72-87.

the multi-faceted ways in which Diana likely intended her prints to be read and received has yet to be explored satisfactorily.

The youngest of the four printmakers examined in this dissertation, Diana benefited significantly from the professional experiences of her father, Giovanni Battista, and older brother, Adamo, and Giorgio Ghisi, both approximately 15 and 25 years her senior. From her father, she learned not only his technical knowledge, and certainly would not have been an engraver were it not for him, but also how to select source material for optimal connoisseurial appeal. She likely profited from her brother's commercial connections and business savvy, and from Ghisi, she could have been influenced by his courtly experience and ability to collaborate with contemporaries. While her career allowed her to work largely with the same source material as her father, for example, the designs of Giulio Romano, it would appear that she engraved much more for profit than as a creative outlet. In her lifetime, she made at least 63 engravings, just over half of the production of her brother and Ghisi, and roughly double that of her father's surviving corpus. Of these, 44 are religious in subject, 19 are secular, and of these, six are of mythological subjects and three of classical history, with 10 of these 19 after Giulio Romano. Her ongoing consideration of the commercial appeal of her work perhaps both led to and resulted from her permanent move to Rome in circa 1573, which occurred at roughly the same time as her first marriage to the architect, Francesco da Volterra.<sup>396</sup>

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<sup>396</sup> Diana likely met Francesco Capriani da Volterra after he was employed by Cesare Gonzaga from 1566 in Guastalla, outside of Mantua, and later in Mantua, where he worked on a *studiolo* for Cesare. d'Arco, *Di cinque*, 29. It is unclear exactly when Diana married Francesco. Lincoln does not establish a date of marriage, although her chronology suggests that they married in 1575, shortly before Diana and Francesco moved to Rome from Mantua. By 1 September 1575, just a few months before her father died of fever, Diana and Francesco were living in a house in the Campo Marzio in Rome. The house, according to a surviving contract, was given to them on the condition that Francesco restored this and another house.

Diana seems to have used her network of artistic contemporaries in order to gain new source material, notably creating only a handful of compositions that may have been original.<sup>397</sup> Of her 63 accepted prints, six are after her husband's assistant, Raffaellino da Reggio, three are after her close friend, Durante Alberti, who was godfather to her son, and 22 are after various other artists, many of whom were likely personal contacts, such as Federico and Taddeo Zuccaro.<sup>398</sup> Her variable technical skill was, at times, inferior to that of her father and Giorgio Ghisi, but was definitely better than that of her brother, Adamo. And yet, despite these two apparently negative factors (lack of original material and variable technical skill), she was admired and famous for her engravings. Her professional identity throughout her life was also likely shaped by the early and effusive

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Lincoln, "Impression," 1113. Francesco upheld his part of the bargain, and the houses were restored "nobilimente", as required, complete with a façade of frescoes depicting *putti* and Hercules, executed by Francesco's assistant from Guastalla, Raffaellino da Reggio. Lincoln, "Impression", 1113. Pagani has also shown that Francesco and Diana must have been married before 5 November 1575, given a document from the *Archivio Capitolare della Basilica di S. Pietro*, dated 5 November 1575, which reports that "Diana, wife of Francesco da Volterra, and Roberto degli Abbati are the godparents for the daughter of Cesare Bonelli da Parma". Pagani, "Review", 84. As cited from Archivio Capitolare della Basilica di S. Pietro, Vaticano, Lib. Bapt., 1541-83, fol. 138v. In his catalogue on Diana and Adamo, Bellini suggests that according to d'Arco, Diana married much earlier, in 1567. Bellini, *Scultori*, 30. (As cited from Archivio Capitolare della Basilica di S. Pietro, Vaticano, Lib. Bapt., 1541-83, fol. 138v). Pagani notes that Bellini's date is no more than conjecture. Pagani, "Review", 75. I would maintain that Diana married in 1573 or later, a supposition supported by two contracts from 1573, noted by Pagani, wherein Francesco secured for the rent of 3 *scudi* every six months two houses in the Campo Marzio, Rome from the Augustinian friars at Sant'Agostino, which he had the right to inhabit for the rest of his life. Pagani, "Review", 84. In preparation for his marriage to Diana, no doubt Francesco would have wanted to provide a home (and perhaps a studio?) for his future family. Francesco already had a son, Orazio, born in May 1559 by his first wife in Rome, Bernadina. Pagani, "Review", 84, as cited from Archivio Capitolare della Basilica di S. Pietro, Vaticano, Lib. Bat. 1541-83, fol. 46v.

<sup>397</sup> One possible original composition may be her *Christ and the Adulteress*.

<sup>398</sup> Francesco and Diana likely suffered a great loss, when Francesco's assistant, Raffaellino da Reggio died in 1578, at the young age of 28. (Paolo Bellini, "Un *Ecce Homo* di Raffaellino da Reggio", *Arte Cristiana*, 78 (1990): 51.) Raffaellino had worked with Francesco in Rome in the 1560's and in Guastalla, outside of Mantua. Manfredo Tafuri, "Capriani, Francesco", *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani*, 19 (Rome: 1976): 190. It would appear that Raffaellino was an accomplished designer and draughtsman and Marcucci suggests that Raffaellino left Diana all of his drawings, some of which she subsequently engraved over the course of her career. Raffaellino had provided Diana with designs even while he was still alive, as suggested by the fact that in or around 1575, she had engraved his *Madonna with Child Blessing Young John the Baptist*.

mention in Vasari's second edition of the *Vite* from 1568, called by one scholar a "very public letter of reference."<sup>399</sup>

It would be a grave mistake to consider Diana's corpus without considering how her sex, and perceptions of her feminine qualities, such as Vasari's "gentle and gracious" comment, may have affected the way in which she worked as well as her production itself. She was the only well-known female engraver in the sixteenth century, and was made more famous by the undeniable fact that her prints were, for the most part, technically acceptable, and at times, of very high quality. Indeed, she used her sex in many different ways, capitalizing on her unusual career choice.<sup>400</sup> She pursued avenues of professional development not immediately obvious to her male colleagues, such as using a Papal agency devoted largely to the well-being of women to apply for a Papal privilege, effectively copyrighting her engraved production.<sup>401</sup> Additionally, she collaborated on a number of projects with her architect husband, who appears to have been nothing but deeply supportive of her art.

Her public identity as an artist was shaped by a number of factors including but not limited to her sex and was inextricably linked according to her geographical location throughout her life. The variety and mutability of her signatures attests to her constant vigilance to the way in which she and her work might be perceived and appreciated. She almost never used a two or three-letter monogram like other engravers, most notably her

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<sup>399</sup> Lincoln, *Invention*, 118.

<sup>400</sup> While it appears to have been acceptable for Diana to engrave, it likely would not have been acceptable for "an honest woman" to run her own printshop. A contemporary, and likely acquaintance of hers, Margherita, the widow of print publisher Claudio Duchetti, gave up her claim of her late husband's printshop to her brother at a tribunal, for which he paid her 1000 scudi and 200 scudi worth of objects as a dowry for her second marriage. Pagani, "Dispersal 1," 13-4; ASR, Notai del Tribunale della S. Rota, Jo. Lucas Remerius, 1568-96, vol. 53, 390v-394.

<sup>401</sup> Lincoln, *Invention*, 123.

father and brother.<sup>402</sup> By avoiding a monogram and using her Christian name instead, she called attention to her gender. It would appear that she began her career signing her prints simply, “Diana”, so famous at least in her hometown of Mantua that no further identification was required. In 1575, she then added the letter “F” after her name, which stood for “Diana Fecit” (Diana made this).<sup>403</sup> Likely, this addition was made in order that viewers, perhaps more widely spread beyond Mantua, would recognize the word “Diana” not as a title of her prints, but as the name of the female printmaker. In the mid to late 1570s she changed it to “Diana Mantuana” or “Diana Mantovana”, indicating her place of birth and probably relating to the time of her move from Mantua to Rome with her husband. In 1579, Diana became a citizen of Volterra.<sup>404</sup> Clearly very proud of this honor, she started including “Civis Volterana” following her name on some engravings.<sup>405</sup>

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<sup>402</sup> An exception to this may be found in *Young Girl with a Basket* and *Woman Putting on her Shoe*, engravings not traditionally included within Diana’s corpus, and considered to be dubiously attributed by Bellini; Bellini believes that the only argument for its attribution to Diana is the DS monograms on the lower left and right hand corners respectively. The *Woman Putting on her Shoe* also has the monogram DIANA S. MANTVANA, in addition to the DS monogram. I agree with Bellini and I am hesitant to assign the engraving, and especially the monogram, to Diana since the DS could just as easily be a collector’s watermark or a posthumous attribution. Additionally, the engraving boasts less shading than Diana typically utilized, even in her earlier prints. (Bellini, *Scultori*, 277-9.)

<sup>403</sup> Bury, *Print*, 8.

<sup>404</sup> Between 1578 and 1584, Francesco and perhaps Diana lived between Rome and Volterra, while Francesco was working on the waterworks and Duomo of the latter city, a splendid opportunity for Francesco to return to his hometown. (Tafari, “Francesco”, 191). Diana’s connection to Volterra was reflected in her engravings from that period. Diana dedicated two engravings to the town of Volterra, both dated 1583: *The Adoration of the Shepherds*, after the Volterrano artist, Rossetti and *Sts. Benedict, Ursula, Lucy, Anthony, and Bernard Worshipping Christ on a Cloud*. Indeed, Diana called herself a ‘civis volaterrana’, following her naturalization, in some of her subsequent monograms, an indication that she felt honored by the citizenship. It is impossible to determine how much time Diana spent in Rome or in Volterra during this period, although many of her engravings indicate that they were at least published in Rome and her activities tend to suggest that she spent at least some of her time in Rome.

<sup>405</sup> According to Lincoln, Diana consistently never signed any engraving with the name Scultori, although it should be noted that on at least one occasion, Diana appears to have signed her name “Diana Sc. Mantuana”, thus contradicting slightly Lincoln’s observation. This particular signature features in the engraving of *St. George and the Dragon*, which is undated, undedicated, and without an inscription. Bellini has suggested that this engraving is based on a design by Giovanni Battista. Bellini, *Scultori*, 166. While it is clear that Diana was not totally consistent in her signature, even within one specific time period, it still must be queried as to why she, in this particular engraving, chose to allude to her familial connections.

Many of Diana's prints that postdate her arrival in Rome carry an unusual number of inscriptions and captions, "bristling with text," as one scholar has noted.<sup>406</sup> At the most, she included her signature, a date, the name of the "inventor" of the composition, a dedication, a statement about the Papal privilege and a narrative caption, and at the least, merely her name. One must disregard most of the publisher's marks, which, with two exceptions, reflect publishers who released Diana's prints posthumously.<sup>407</sup> The text that fill many of Diana's prints should be noted and warrant careful analysis. With her Latin and Greek captions and the wording of her dedications especially, she sought to emphasize her claim to learning and illuminate her images with words. While Giovanni Battista and Ghisi may have embellished compositions and changed source material to suit their own contextual readings, Diana used words, in the form of captions, dedications and notation of her papal privilege, to give her prints an additional meaning.

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Lincoln explains the existence of the Sc. as a shortening of "sculpsit" or "scultor", just as with F for "fecit"; this seems improbable however, since if Diana had intended to mean "Diana Mantuana made this", surely the Sc. would have appeared at the end of the name and not in the middle, as it is, between "Diana" and "Mantuana". Lincoln, *Invention*, 178, n. 40. An alternative explanation is that the full name, Diana Sc. Mantuana was added posthumously. A year after her death, in 1613, a publisher addressed a secondary state of her engraving, *Christ and the Adulteress*, with "Diana Scultori Mantoana fece. Antonio Caranzano la stampa in Roma l'anno 1613." This address indicates at least that Diana's name "Scultori" and indeed her connection to her father and brother, who used the name Scultori while alive, was familiar to people in Rome, like her posthumous publisher, Caranzano. Therefore, even if she did not use the name Scultori in her signature, it was perhaps a name that she would have been associated with in the course of her life, at least in Mantua and possibly in Rome. Interestingly, Diana is called Diana Mantuana and not by the name Scultori in the Papal privilege. It is most likely, of course, that Caranzano inserted the name Scultori to market this engraving, the plate for which he probably owned. A third explanation, and the most likely, could be that Diana fully intended the "Sc" to stand for Scultori, and used it in this one case because the composition is thought to have been after a drawing by her father. Perhaps, as her father was the source for the image, she was paying tribute to him by including a reference to his name. Once she moved to Rome, it is less likely that people knew her according to her father and his nickname, and it would have made more sense to use Mantuana, as she did, to identify her place of birth, as was done by most artists. It is, incidentally, of some interest that her brother used the name Scultori consistently both in his monogram and in his contracts, even while living in Rome.

<sup>406</sup> Lincoln, *Invention*, 135.

<sup>407</sup> Lafreri and Duchetti both appear to have published Diana's prints during her lifetime. These include *Three Archangels Adoring the Virgin*, *Attilio Regolo* and *The Death* in the case of Lafreri and the *Hercules Farnese*, *Spinario* and *Farnese Bull* for Duchetti.

Perhaps, because of the nature of the printmaking industry in Rome in the 1570s, her female gender and “gracious” demeanor necessitated the additional measure of protection in the form of a Papal privilege. In 1575, she petitioned the Papal authority for a privilege that protected at least five specified prints, along with her future production, effectively copywriting them in a way that had been done only by a few printmakers before her (including, of course, Ghisi).<sup>408</sup> The Papal privilege likely came at no small fiscal cost.<sup>409</sup> Michael Bury notes that the “effective use of dedications and the obtaining of privileges were significant conditions for success”, an observation that could ultimately justify Diana’s application.<sup>410</sup> Applying for a Papal privilege was a fairly unusual practice before the papacy of Gregory XIII, and Diana is one of the first engravers to do so.<sup>411</sup> The privilege is dated 5 June, 1575 and resembles a book printing privilege.<sup>412</sup> It is about 300 words in length and names Diana as “wife of Franciscus Cipriani the architect, who is staying in this our *alma Urbe*...” and indicates that she learned her art from her father, the famous sculptor.<sup>413</sup> The privilege suggests that Diana applied for it because she was reluctant to print her engravings without a license and it was to protect her engravings from being copied and then sold “by others of either sex, but most especially book dealers, sculptors, engravers and printers”.<sup>414</sup> The privilege rendered any unlicensed publisher or vendor of her engravings liable to a heavy fine of

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<sup>408</sup> Bury, *Print*, 128. For a more general consideration of the value of privileges, see Lisa Pon, “Prints and Privileges: Regulating the Image in 16th-Century Italy,” *Harvard University Art Museums Bulletin*, 6 (1998): 40-64. See also Witcombe, *Copyright*.

<sup>409</sup> Bury, *Print*, 128.

<sup>410</sup> Bury, *Print*, 126.

<sup>411</sup> Bury, *Print*, 128.

<sup>412</sup> Transcription of Privilege, Appendix B, Lincoln, *Invention*, 189. (As cited from Archivio Segreto Vaticano, Arm. XLII (28), fol. 213r.-v.)

<sup>413</sup> “Diana Mantuana uxor dilecti filii Francisci Cipriani Architecti, quae cum eo in hac alma Vrbe nostra commoratur...”; “hanc artem a patre, qui sculptor insignis est docta.” Lincoln, *Invention*, 189.

<sup>414</sup> “dubit[at] ne postea ab aliis eadem opera sine eius licentia imprimantur”; “et singulis utriusque sexus praesertim Bibliopolis, sculptoribus, Incisoribus, et impressoribus...” Lincoln, *Invention*, 189.



approximately 500 *ducati*.<sup>415</sup> Of this, one third would have gone to the Pope in office, one third to Diana, and the final third to the judge who issued the decision, naturally encouraging a judgment in favor of the artist.<sup>416</sup> In addition to such a fine, the punishment also included immediate excommunication from the Catholic Church.<sup>417</sup> Bury points out that the very fact that engravers and publishers continued increasingly to apply for Papal privileges proves that the privileges had to have been somewhat effective.<sup>418</sup>

In the privilege, only five named engravings are included explicitly, presumably her best to that point: *Christ and the Adulteress* [Fig. 103], *The Feast of the Gods* [Fig. 101], *Procession of Roman Horsemen* [Fig. 104], *The Nativity*, and *St. Jerome* [Fig. 105].<sup>419</sup> Four of the five engravings listed on the privilege can be identified with her surviving engravings, but *The Nativity* remains unidentified.<sup>420</sup> Interestingly, there are

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<sup>415</sup> This amount was mistranslated by Lincoln, who said it was only 50 *ducati*: “et immediate subiectis et quingentorum ducatorum auri de Camera...”. Lincoln, *Invention*, 189. For mistranslation, see Lincoln, *Invention*, 124.

<sup>416</sup> Eckhard Leuschner, “The Papal Printing Privilege”, *Print Quarterly*, 15 (1998): 366.

<sup>417</sup> “quibuscumque sub excommunicationis latae sententiae Vrbe, et locis quibuscumque Sanctae Romanae Ecclesiae mediate,...”. Lincoln, *Invention*, 189. It is impossible to determine how effective such a sentence would be in deterring Diana’s colleagues from selling or printing her images without her express permission, and enforcement of such a sentence, especially of immediate excommunication, might have been difficult to implement realistically.

<sup>418</sup> Bury, *Print*, 128. Further, the timing of the privilege may have been to deter one publisher in particular from printing her engravings without her express permission: it was in 1575 that Adamo’s partnership with Lafreri was being dissolved, and it is highly likely that Diana and Adamo were trying to protect Diana’s interests. Rather tellingly, Lafreri does not seem to have printed any of Diana’s prints after 1575, perhaps because he no longer had access to the plates and feared the promised fines and excommunication should he produce her prints without permission.

<sup>419</sup> “et in aes inciderit[.]... utique Historiam Euangelii de adultera, Conuiuium Deorum, cursu, seu...equorum Triumpho Caesaris ex Iulii Romani, Natiuitatem Domini nostri Iesu Christi, ex Iulii miniatoris, Imaginem Sancti Hieronimi ex Danielis de Vulterra modulis et inuentionibus”. Lincoln, *Invention*, 124.

<sup>420</sup> The privilege reads “Natiuitatem Domini nostri Iesu Cristi, ex Iulii miniatoris”, which Lincoln translates as “Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ from [Giulio Clovio] the miniaturist.” Lincoln, *Invention*, 124. However, today no Nativity engraved by Diana after Clovio is known, which suggests that it no longer exists. There is a preparatory drawing and at least one miniature of the *Adoration of the Shepherds*, or commonly, *The Nativity* by Clovio, which features in the *Farnese Book of Hours*. The *Farnese Book of Hours* certainly would have been in Rome at least until 1550, at which point it was probably moved to Florence. Maria Cionini-Visani, *Giorgio Clovio: Miniaturist of the Renaissance* (New York: Alpine Fine

four additional engravings that refer to the privilege within their inscriptions, despite the fact that they are not listed by name on the document. These are *Madonna with Child Blessing Young John the Baptist*, 1575 [Fig. 106], *The Sacrifice of Abraham*, 1575 [Fig. 107], which is after Giulio Clovio, *Christ and Mary Magdalen at the Table of Simon the Pharisee*, 1576 [Fig. 108], and the *Holy Family in Egypt*, 1577 [Fig. 109].<sup>421</sup> The privilege is indicated on all eight of the engravings with generally the same language: “By papal privilege granted by Gregory XIII for the duration of 10 years.”<sup>422</sup> While the papal privilege does not name these additional engravings, there is nothing in the document that indicates that the privilege did not extend to cover them. In fact, it suggests the opposite, saying, “and those incised but not as yet printed, and those being printed but which have not yet received a privilege...” signifying that even the engravings that Diana had not yet printed were protected by the privilege for the next 10 years.<sup>423</sup>

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Arts Collection, 1980): 64. However, Clovio, after moving to Florence, returned to Rome in the late 1560s and additionally, there were probably drawings and possibly other prints after Clovio's *Nativity* in circulation. Cionini-Visani, *Clovio*, 64. The original drawing is now in the Royal Collection at Windsor Castle and the *Farnese Book of Hours* is in the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York. Perhaps Diana engraved her copper plate after Clovio's *Nativity*, but it was destroyed before any engravings could be printed, thus explaining the absence of such a print today. Diana did engrave two other Nativities, which do survive, however one is after Paolo Rosseti and the other is a very small *Adoration of the Shepherds* at the top of the *Lunario*, printed by Diana and Francesco in 1584-86. The second *Nativity* in the *Lunario* does not resemble a known composition by Clovio. Diana had engraved two other engravings after Clovio, including *The Sacrifice of Abraham* and the *Mourning for Christ's Death*, which indicates that Diana had access to at least some of Clovio's drawings or miniatures. Bellini suggests that *The Sacrifice of Abraham* is after a miniature made by Clovio in Rome and that the *Mourning for Christ's Death* was made after a drawing by Clovio, now in London's Victoria and Albert Museum, based on a work by Michelangelo. Bellini, *Scultori*, 194 and 195.

<sup>421</sup> Bury notes that *The Sacrifice of Abraham* also bore the privilege, however, he does not note the other three engravings. Bury, *Print*, 134, n. 165.

<sup>422</sup> “DI GREGORIVS PP XIII PRIVILEGIO P AN X.”

<sup>423</sup> “...incisura illaque adhuc non impressa, et super quibus imprimendis non hactenus privilegium obtinuit...”. Lincoln, *Invention*, 189; Bury, *Print*, 129.

Diana's privilege was granted by the *Segretaria Breviorum*, which was an office focused mainly on women's issues like dowries and marriage privileges.<sup>424</sup> Bury notes that the *Segretaria Breviorum* was the office that issued the briefs in response to the petition for a privilege and was set up in the "sixteenth century to handle letters of non-diplomatic and spiritual content".<sup>425</sup> As discussed above, Diana used her Gonzaga connections in order to persuade Claudio Gonzaga to arrange for her Papal privilege in 1575.<sup>426</sup>

The timing of her privilege application was crucial: Diana seems to have moved recently from Mantua to Rome, and was no doubt increasingly aware of just how competitive the Roman print market was, especially under the control of such publishers as Lafreri.<sup>427</sup> If she had moved to Rome in 1573, as seems likely, her brother, Adamo, would have been entering into his partnership with Lafreri, and most probably assisted her significantly in this new city.<sup>428</sup> Further, given this partnership, she may have sought the privilege to protect her own plates and prints, some of which Adamo may have originally contributed. That the privilege specifies protection for "those being printed" might indicate that she was trying to extricate some of her own material from her brother's partnership.

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<sup>424</sup> Lincoln, *Invention*, 123.

<sup>425</sup> Bellini, *Scultori*, 128.

<sup>426</sup> Claudio was working, at that time, as the major-domo in the household of Gregory XIII and, according to Lincoln, would have been a 'familiar' of the Pope in such a capacity, and thus would have been in a position to apply for the privilege on behalf of Diana. An undated letter from Peranda to Claudio congratulates him on his post of Majordomo. As cited in Lincoln, *Invention*, 128-129 (Gio. Francesco Peranda, *Lettere del Signor Gio. Francesco Peranda* (Venice: Barezzo Barezzi, 1621): 28.

<sup>427</sup> According to his contemporary, Paolo Graziano, Lafreri had the reputation of counterfeiting the new prints sold by other dealers. Pagani, "Dispersal 1," 1; ASR, Tribunale criminale del Governatore di Roma, Costituiti, 26 October 1577-18 January 1578, vol. 245, fol. 21v-23, 36-38r.

<sup>428</sup> See Masetti Zannini, *Stampatori*, 212-4, 262-270; Masetti Zannini, *Collection*, 547-66.

A further measure of protection was established by Diana's inclusion of dedications on a number of her prints. Unlike her father and brother before her, she included dedications on nine of her prints, three of which were directed toward members of the Gonzaga family, including the *Feast of the Gods*, dedicated to Claudio, discussed above. She may have intended for these dedications to elevate her status to that more akin to a courtier in the city of Rome, and they reveal much more about Diana's engravings than first meets the eye. While the multi-layered readings possible in the works by Giovanni Battista and Ghisi were, for the most part, facilitated by visual interpolations, the contemporary interpretations embedded in Diana's prints were largely aided by the inclusion of dedications and captions.

### **A Sixteenth-Century Adulterer**

Claudio Gonzaga was not the only member of the Gonzaga family to whom Diana had dedicated a print in 1575. As a further effort to protect her work and promote her fame and courtly connections, Diana released her *Christ and the Adulteress*, which measures 16.5 by 22.5 inches, and was dedicated to Eleonora, Archduchess of Austria, who had married Duke Guglielmo Gonzaga in 1561. [Fig. 103] While a relationship between Diana and Claudio can be proposed based on the dedication on the *Feast of the Gods*, her relationship with Eleonora is more ambiguous. In the lengthy dedication, Diana calls attention to her gratitude for her hometown and the Gonzaga, saying:

To her Serene Highness, Lady Eleonora of Austria, Duchess of Mantua.  
Diana Mantovana. I feel myself so tied to the memory of your Ladyship's  
most fortunate dominion, under which I was born and learned what little  
virtue I possess, that to satisfy in part the gratitude in my soul I have been  
so bold as to bring this work of mine to light under her great name, in  
order that, returning to where it had its beginning, it serves her prince

again, as a token of my service to your highness and your most serene house. From Rome, 1 September 1575.<sup>429</sup>

The dedication once again suggests that this print too could be a re-working of an original design from Mantua. Lincoln seems to take the dedication as a reference to the original designer of the composition, in her mind, Giulio Romano.<sup>430</sup> Alternatively, it is also possible that Diana is referring to the place where she started working on the plate. As with the *Feast of the Gods*, she may have commenced work on the print in Mantua and completed it on her arrival in Rome.

The subject derives from an episode in the gospel of John, 7:53-8:11, in which Jesus stands up to the scribes and Pharisees in defense of an adulteress to save her from death by stoning. Famously, Jesus said: “Let he who is without sin cast the first stone,” a task for which no one dare volunteer. While it is difficult to ascertain, the print may have been only one of a few compositions originally by Diana, albeit with significant debts owed to the designs of Giulio Romano, hence her statement, “returning to where it had its beginning” in the dedication. According to Bellini, the scene may derive from a drawing, now unknown, by Giulio Romano, and relate loosely to a drawing conserved in the Städelsches Kunstinstitut in Frankfurt.<sup>431</sup> Bellini also rightly links the composition, and specifically, the columns and the pediment of the door, to a tapestry of a different subject, *St Peter Healing the Cripple*, designed by Giulio Romano, Penni and Giovanni da Udine and made by a tapestry maker in Brussels.<sup>432</sup> Diana was likely familiar with this tapestry

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<sup>429</sup> Lincoln, *Invention*, 134-5.

<sup>430</sup> Lincoln, *Invention*, 135.

<sup>431</sup> Certainly related to the print is a drawing in the Louvre, which is a copy after the print (Inv. No. 3614).

<sup>432</sup> Bellini, *Scultori*, 199; Mark Evans, et al. *Raphael: Cartoons and Tapestries for the Sistine Chapel* (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 2010).

series to some degree, given that the Gonzaga had a set made after the Papal set.<sup>433</sup> Additionally, she made a print after another of the tapestries in the series, that of the *Calling of St Peter*, the dating of which is debated.<sup>434</sup> Giulio Romano is also known to have designed a number of tapestries for the Gonzaga family, including the *Puttini* for Federico II and Cardinal Ercole, and the *Puttini* and *Fructus Belli* for their brother, Ferrante, among many others.<sup>435</sup> However, none of the above surviving tapestries is a close match to Diana's print. At the least, as with the print dedicated to Claudio, Diana is working in a language familiar to the Gonzaga through visual references to Giulio Romano and his contemporaries, while possibly creating a new scene.

Diana, or the designer, has composed the scene so that Christ and the Adulteress are delineated as the two primary characters. Their isolation is highlighted by the placement of the two figures between two central columns. Oddly, the arm of Christ is cut in half by the column, covering his left arm, so that only his outstretched hand is visible on the other side of the column. This may have been a technical fault of Diana's and it seems incongruent with the rest of the print. The figure of the Adulteress is more successful: the profile of the bottom half of her figure reflects the curve of the column, while the curls of her hair mirror the curved lines within the column. Her face, in profile, characterizes perfectly the feeling of shame and contrition, and is perhaps Diana's best-rendered face in all of her prints.

The mob of scribes and Pharisees, recognizable in their headgear and robes, seem to stream from the portico, suggesting that they are already departing the scene; Christ's defense a success. Although still in deep discussion, signified by their varied hand

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<sup>433</sup> Lincoln, *Invention*, 135; see also Brown, *Tapestries*, 63.

<sup>434</sup> Bellini, *Scultori*, 181-4.

<sup>435</sup> Brown, *Tapestries*, 174-193; 158-173.

gestures, the crowd has already been rebuffed, stepping carefully over the beggars and lame men. The way in which the crowd ignores these beggars seems to further emphasize their callousness, contrasting the sympathy felt for such people by Christ and his disciples.

The placement of the scene on the porch of a building, which resembles a round temple, is worthy of note. While the subject of Christ and the Adulteress was not hugely popular in the sixteenth century, the contemporary depictions most typically show the scene unfolding in a large, often covered space, sometimes resembling a piazza, as seen in the roughly contemporaneous paintings by Benvenuto Garafalo (1481-1559), Polidoro da Lanziano (c. 1515-1565), both of whose work are at the Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, and Tintoretto (1518-1594) in the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam. Alternatively, the Venetian tradition seems to stage the scene as an intimate group picture, showing Christ and the Adulteress surrounded closely by a few additional figures, without much reference to the space in which they stand, as seen in the paintings by Titian (1515) at the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Lorenzo Lotto (c. 1530) at the Louvre, Paris, and Palma il Vecchio (c.1525-8) at the Capitoline Museum, Rome. The latter type of picture emphasizes the facial expressions and gestures of those involved. In Diana's scene, the Solomonic columns and round temple appear almost to be a character in the scene, with equal attention paid to the architecture and the crowd. Diana's depiction of the scene appears to be the first in which the main characters occupy this liminal space under a portico.

This innovation is key: the placement of Christ and the Adulteress at this threshold thematizes liminality within the print. The Adulteress has the choice of

returning to the symbolic temple and Christ's fold, or squandering his defense and forgiveness. Christ and the Adulteress stand on the porch of a *tempio*, a round temple, not unlike the *tempietto* designed by Bramante in Rome, or the medieval church of St Lawrence in Mantua. Unfortunately, Diana's technical skills fail her in depicting the building as completely round: the line of columns seems to straighten out at the left of the print, while the building behind the porch appears to continue its curve. Diana's treatment of the building is all the more disappointing given that she was married to an architect. Disappointing too is the white, empty space in the upper right corner of the print, where one might expect to see further buildings or landscape, normally a certainty in most of Diana's other prints.

The subject of the print was intended to be moralizing, and not inappropriate for a figure such as Eleonora Gonzaga. The business of dedicating a print to an illustrious individual was, in most instances, an attempt by the printmaker to solicit money. Ideally, the dedicatee would be so pleased with the print that they would remunerate the printmaker for their efforts. However, there is rarely consistency in the way in which these relationships worked, and it is very possible that Diana would not have been acquainted with all of her dedicatees.<sup>436</sup> Nor can it be assumed that a dedicatee would be pleased with the association. In a letter from Domenicus Lampsonius, Secretary to the Bishop of Liege, to Giulio Clovio from 1570, he warns that a poorly executed print might damage the reputation of the dedicatees.<sup>437</sup> Given that Diana only dedicated a small portion of her prints, it appears that she selected her dedicatees carefully and hopefully, to

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<sup>436</sup> Bury, *Print*, 78.

<sup>437</sup> Walter Melion, "Hendrick Goltzius's Project of Reproductive Engraving," *Art History*, 13, (1990): 472. (458-87); See also Gregory, *Vasari*, 312.



maximum affect. Logically, it would be in her best interest to match her few dedicatees with appropriate prints.

Where one might expect such a dedicatee to necessitate a scene of female devotion, such as a Virgin and Child or another female saint, both of which Diana made many, instead she selected to associate her dedicatee with the story of a fallen woman, saved from punishment by Christ. This particular story thematizes humility, redemption, temperance, and, of course, adultery: the open door of the temple indicates that the woman has an opportunity for forgiveness and a return to a life of purity. Her facial expression, so evocative, communicates her acceptance of the forgiveness of Christ, and one hopes, her intention to change her ways.

Concerning the chosen subject and a link to the dedicatee, Diana is relatively opaque, perhaps deliberately so, in the dedication itself. The first state of the print does not carry the dedication, and indeed, the print must have been made prior to, or at the same time as, the granting of the papal privilege, as it is listed on the privilege document, and testified to in the inscription on the print. Diana added the dedication and a date in the second state. Her dedicatee, in addition to being married to Guglielmo Gonzaga, Duke of Mantua (1538-1587), was the daughter of the Holy Roman Emperor, Ferdinand of Austria, the younger brother of Charles V, and provided a blood link between the Gonzaga and Hapsburg houses. About her sisters (she had already moved to Mantua), a visitor to their home at Ambras Castle, in Innsbruck commented that one had to treat them “in a manner more befitting nuns than a court.”<sup>438</sup> While her life appears to have been

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<sup>438</sup> Lisa Kaborycha, “Expressing a Habsburgh Sensibility in the Medici Court: The Grand Duchess Giovanna d’Austria’s Patronage and Public Image in Florence,” *Medici Women As Cultural Mediators, 1533-1743: Le Donne Di Casa Medici e Il Loro Ruolo Di Mediatrici Culturali Fra Le Corti D’europa*, edited by Christina Strunck (Milan: Cinisello Balsamo, 2011): 89.

without incident, the relationship between her sister and brother-in-law provided much fodder for international gossip. Eleonora's sister, Johanna of Austria (1547-1578) married Francesco I de Medici in 1565. Their unhappy relationship became the subject of much discussion in 1574, a year before the dedication of this print, when Francesco installed his mistress, Bianca Capello, in a palace in Florence.<sup>439</sup> Johanna herself did not have a significant amount of money to pay in the support of the arts, but what little money she did have at her disposal, she was known to have given to charity.<sup>440</sup> She had strong ties to the church and according to Kaborycha, "the church recognized her as the single strongest ally in Tuscany, granting her many honours and privileges."<sup>441</sup> Her piety and devotion were well known to her Tuscan subjects and throughout Italy, demonstrated on her pilgrimage to the Casa Santa in Loreto in 1573.<sup>442</sup> Johanna died in childbirth in 1578, and while she appears to have died in natural circumstances, rumors abounded that she died at the hands of her adulterous husband.<sup>443</sup> Bianca and Francesco married not long after Johanna's death in secret, and, later, their public wedding festivities were immortalized in a book by Raffaello Gualterotti published in 1579.<sup>444</sup> Indisputably, the primary subject of Christ and the Adulteress was Christ's forgiveness of adultery.

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<sup>439</sup> On Bianca Capello, see Emanuele Antonio Cicogna, *Delle iscrizioni veneziane*, (Venice: 1842) vol. 5, 563–5, and *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, edited by Alberto Maria Ghisalberti, vol. 10: 15–16 (Bianca Capello). See also Jacqueline Marie Musacchio, "Objects and Identity: Antonio de' Medici and the Casino at San Marco in Florence," *The Renaissance World*, edited by John Jeffery Martin (New York and London: Routledge, 2007): 481-500. On the artistic patronage of Johanna, see also Kaborycha, "Expressing," 89-109.

<sup>440</sup> Kaborycha, "Expressing," 96 and 98.

<sup>441</sup> Kaborycha, "Expressing," 98.

<sup>442</sup> Kaborycha, "Expressing," 100.

<sup>443</sup> Kaborycha, "Expressing," 90.

<sup>444</sup> *Feste nelle nozze del serenissimo Don Francesco Medici Gran Duca di Toscana; et della sereniss Sua consorte la sig. Bianca Cappello* (Celebrations for the marriage of the Most Serene Don Francesco de' Medici, Grand Duke of Tuscany, and His Most Serene Consort, Bianca Cappello), Musacchio, "Objects," 482.

Perhaps Diana thought that the biblical subject would resonate with Eleonora.<sup>445</sup> To a sixteenth-century audience, Johanna's pious tolerance, and perhaps, forgiveness, of her husband's very public adultery made her a figure to be admired.<sup>446</sup> Diana could have offered the print to Eleonora as a token of flattery towards her sister, as if to say that Johanna was Christ-like in her capacity to forgive. While such a connection does not have to be made in order for a viewer to appreciate the print, it is possible that a sixteenth-century viewer may have thought of the dedicatee's sister and her fraught marriage to an adulterous husband. By attaching this dedicatee to this print, Diana was offering a contemporary context for this biblical subject. Returning to the theme of liminality, Diana's print is an exercise once again in initiation. A viewer might use Diana's dedication to read the print according to contemporary events, such as the details concerning Johanna's marital betrayal, or if unfamiliar with such details, might consider more generally, the return of the adulterous woman to the fold of Christ, re-initiated into the kingdom of heaven through his redemption.

### **"Aes incidimus": Diana's Artistic Reputation**

Throughout her career, Diana sought to demonstrate her own initiation into the ranks of her printmaking, and art-making, colleagues. Chief among her priorities was her desire to establish her claim to learning. She likely experienced some professional satisfaction when she was accepted into an artistic confraternity, "*I Virtuosi al Pantheon*" (or more formerly, "Congregazione di S. Giuseppe di Terra Santa alla Rotunda") in

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<sup>445</sup> Diana and her husband, Francesco, had ties to Florence and the Medici. In 1582, Diana dedicated her *Martyrdom of St Lawrence* to Cardinal Ferdinando de Medici, and in 1580, Francesco commenced work on the Cathedral of Volterra, with the permission of Cardinal de Medici. Manfredo Tafuri, *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani*, 19 (Roma: Istituto della Enciclopedia italiana, 1976): 191.

<sup>446</sup> The orations written on the occasion of her death liken her to a martyr and a saint. On this, see Kaborycha, "Expressing," 101-2.

1580.<sup>447</sup> *I Virtuosi* was instrumental in Diana and Francesco's careers, in that the organization formed the social, professional and religious nucleus of their lives in Rome and beyond.<sup>448</sup> *I Virtuosi* was established in 1543 and had its own chapel located in the Pantheon where the members could hold services.<sup>449</sup> The company raised funds for the dowering of daughters of artists, and the company even had the right to request a pardon for one prisoner from the courts annually.<sup>450</sup> Most of the leading artists in Rome in the mid-sixteenth century were members of the company, including Perino del Vaga and Daniele da Volterra, together with architects, such as Pirro Ligorio and Giacomo Barozzi da Vignola, as well as Diana's brother, Adamo.<sup>451</sup>

Diana appears to have participated in the company activities to the extent to which she was permitted, joining in the religious processions and festivals.<sup>452</sup> Lincoln argues that Diana was one of the first women allowed into the company, a measure taken only when it was impoverished.<sup>453</sup> It was, apparently, the custom of the company to host exhibitions on the feast day of St. Joseph, something in which Diana is not likely to have participated as a woman.<sup>454</sup> According to the rules of 1609, each entering artist, including women, had to present a work, either a picture or relief, with which they were able to prove their worthiness as an artist of joining such esteemed company.<sup>455</sup> Lincoln believes that Diana would have had to comply with such conditions when she entered the

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<sup>447</sup> Diana's husband was accepted in 1577. Adamo was accepted in 1578. Pagani, "Review", 79; 75. On *I virtuosi*, see J.A.F. Orbaan, "Virtuosi al Pantheon," *Repertorium für Kunstwissenschaft*, 37 (1914): 17-52.

<sup>448</sup> Lincoln, *Invention*, 137-8.

<sup>449</sup> Nikolaus Pevsner, *Academies of Art, Past and Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1940): 56.

<sup>450</sup> Pevsner, *Academies*, 56.

<sup>451</sup> Pevsner, *Academies*, 56.

<sup>452</sup> Lincoln, "Impression", 1113.

<sup>453</sup> Lincoln, *Invention*, 137.

<sup>454</sup> Lincoln, *Invention*, 137.

<sup>455</sup> Lincoln, *Invention*, 137. (As cited from the *Ordine della accademia de pittori e scultori di Roma*, Rome, 1609, 39-40.)

company in 1580, but it is unclear when these rules came into effect and whether Diana actually submitted one of her works.<sup>456</sup> It would appear that there would be no reason why Diana could not have submitted an engraving that she had made previously to comply with the stipulations. Among the works that Diana released around 1580, which could have served as a submission, are her prints after a frieze, discussed below and dated 1579, or the *Conversion of St Eustace*, after Federigo Zuccaro and dated 1580. Both would have been appropriate for such a purpose, however, equally, an older print may have sufficed.

Always conscious of her reputation and accomplishments, Diana and Francesco likely commemorated their initiation into *I Virtuosi* by commissioning a pair of portrait medals. An unknown medallist, perhaps a member of the company themselves, who went by the monogram, “TR”, made the medals. [Figs. 110 and 111] Both of the medals measure 1.57” in diameter and were cast in bronze. On the obverse of both Diana and Francesco’s medals, are their individual portrait busts, in profile, looking to the right.<sup>457</sup> The inscription on her medal reads: “DIANA MANTVANA·T·R·.”<sup>458</sup> The reverses of the two medals are also consistent with each other: they both display the tools of their trade. Diana’s medal shows a hand holding a burin and a copper plate representing the Virgin and Child, surrounded by the inscription, “AES INCIDIMUS,” (We engrave

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<sup>456</sup> Lincoln, *Invention*, 137.

<sup>457</sup> G. F. Hill discovered that there were two versions of Francesco’s medal, one in the British Museum and a second in Berlin: this is typical of medals, given that the medal maker would have made a series of casts for each customer. G.F. Hill, *Portrait Medal of Italian Artists of the Renaissance* (London: Medici Society, 1912): 71-72.

<sup>458</sup> The inscription on Francesco’s medal reads: “FRANCISCUS VOLATERANUS·T·R·.” On the obverse, his medal shows a hand holding a compass and square edge around which there is the inscription: “SI QUID VALEMUS” (If we are able).

metal) [Fig. 112 and 113].<sup>459</sup> The inclusion of the image of the Virgin and Child is no doubt extremely intentional, conveying Diana's devotion and highlighting her most frequent subject. Her medal has a slight bump on the obverse, a mistake made while casting, directly below her cuff.<sup>460</sup> Diana's medal is successful in communicating her piety and modesty, while at the same time promoting her business in a straightforward manner. Initiation into such an organization as *I Virtuosi* would have been the perfect opportunity to commission such medals, and Diana and Francesco would have looked about the age they appear on the medals, 40 and 55 respectively, in 1577-1580.<sup>461</sup>

A further effort to demonstrate her claim to learning can be found in a group of prints that Diana made after architectural drawings made by her husband. These prints likely represent the nucleus of a project that Diana and Francesco hoped might grow into the publication of a book of architectural prints. These four prints, which are after pieces of architectural sculpture, act as advertisements for their collective artistic skills. Two of these four prints bear Francesco's name in the inscription as well as the place from which the architectural fragment supposedly came. Three of the four inscriptions on these prints are also, notably, in Latin rather than Italian, reflecting that the subjects are ancient architectural details, and would form an academic book.

The first of these, which is dated 1576, is an intricately engraved and impressive print of half of a volute of a composite column. [Fig. 114] This print is relatively large for Diana's prints, measuring 11.9 x 17.3 inches, and has been carefully engraved.

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<sup>459</sup> Diana appears in the costume of a respectable woman, for she has her neat hair tucked into a headscarf and she is wearing a high-collared dress, a costume defined as that of a "well-behaved woman." Catherine King, "Looking a Sight: Sixteenth-Century Portraits of Woman Artists," *Zeitschrift Fur Kunstgeschichte*, 58 (1995): 387.

<sup>460</sup> According to Luke Syson, as told to Michael Bury.

<sup>461</sup> The medallist T.R. was active during the 1570's. Hill, *Medals*, 72

However, the way in which Diana has shown the column capital makes it appear slightly awkward. The column capital has been partially flattened in order to fit the print medium, and without a column beneath it, appears to float oddly. Only half of the capital is pictured, allowing for a very close view of this intricately constructed architectural detail. There is no indication in the print about how the detail fits into a larger schema, and there is no indication of measurement or proportion. The flattened aspect of the print also makes it difficult to see the detail within three dimensions. The dimensions are further complicated by the way in which the stone “acanthus” seems to overlap the egg and dart pattern. Clearly, this print does not appear to have been intended for a general audience, but instead for someone with advanced knowledge of ancient architectural details. The relatively lengthy inscription on this print further supports this interpretation:

This volute and old composite capital order of a numidian stone column, from St Peter in Vaticano for the Baptistry of Saint Peter was recorded by Francesco da Volterra in order to be useful to these artists for study. Diana Mantuana, his wife, engraved it. 1576.<sup>462</sup>

Thus, Diana not only identifies her husband as the source for the image, but also indicates that the drawing and print were executed for the purposes of study. As in her *Christ and the Adulteress* with the round temple, she also calls attention to their access to the architectural details of such places as the Vatican, access that enabled them close contact with material perhaps not immediately available to most. Francesco, and Diana, would have been eager to demonstrate their knowledge of ancient material such as this volute and the access Francesco had to such material and their Papal connections.

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<sup>462</sup> “Volutam hanc e veteri Capitello composti ordinis columae numidici lapidis Divi Petri in Vaticano per Baptistam de Petra Sancta et Frances. m Volaterranu ad comunem huius[que] artis studioso’ tu utilitate’s formatam Diana Mantuana eiusdem Fran[ci] uxor Rom[a]e incidebat. MDLXXVI.”

Diana produced a second print after a frieze of ornamental foliage, which was also likely based on a drawing by her husband, although she did not include his name on this particular print. [Fig. 115] If indeed this print, which measures 16.5 by 11.5 inches, were intended as part of a larger project, then Francesco's name would not need to be on each print. Dated to the following year, Diana has inscribed the following on this second print: "Baptistry of St Peter, from antiquity, Diana Mantuana engraved it in Rome 1577."<sup>463</sup>

The frieze features a curling acanthus, on which can be found two winged bugs in the upper right corner, a bird on the right edge and a snail in the bottom right. One concludes, however rightly, from these prints that they are true records of the original ancient friezes, especially as the place from which they come is labeled clearly on both prints. As with Diana's previous print, and her other prints after sculpture, freestanding or otherwise, the background of the print is shown with stippled dots, the way in which Diana communicates the original sculptural state of the subject.<sup>464</sup>

Diana's third print that is similar in nature is a print after a frieze, which measures 9.8 by 17.1 inches, also featuring an acanthus, in this case replete of animals or bugs. It also has a stippled background, suggesting she was again working after a sculptural frieze. [Fig. 116] The inscription on this, however, is different from that on the previous two prints, in that it does not indicate the location of the original fragment, but rather suggests that Francesco designed and made it: "Francesco, Citizen of Volterra made this for public use, and Diana, his wife, engraved it in Rome."<sup>465</sup> Francesco, who was from Volterra, seems to have conducted work there between 1578 and 1584, while also working in Rome, and may have wished to emphasize his connection with his home city

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<sup>463</sup> "Battista di Pietra Santa Dall Antico Diana Mantuana incidebat Romae 1577."

<sup>464</sup> This can be seen in Diana's *Spinario* and *Herceules Farnese*.

<sup>465</sup> "Franc[iscus], Civis Volaterranus publice utilitati formabat, et Diana Uxor incidebat Romae."



at this time.<sup>466</sup> Thus, while the print is undated, it seems likely to date from about the same time as the other two similar prints, circa 1577.

The final surviving print made by Diana after an architectural fragment features an acanthus frieze, which runs over an architrave with three decorative borders. [Fig. 117] The inscription, this time in Italian, on the print is relatively detailed: “a fragment of a frieze, and architrave from the antique Basilica in Rome, now called *il Pantano*, designed by Battista Gioldo da Como, and engraved by Diana Mantuana in 1580”.<sup>467</sup> It is large in size, measuring 11.8 x 18.3 inches, and is impressive in its intricacy, and most importantly, acts as a good testament to her skill. The frieze is not one designed by Diana’s husband, although possibly drawn by him, and designed by someone she identifies as “Battista Gioldo da Como.” While there is no sculptor contemporary to Diana known by this name, it is possible that Diana could be referring to one of two churches. One possibility would be San Basilio ai Pantani in the Forum of Augustus, which has its roots in the fourth century.<sup>468</sup>

Even though she identifies the church as being in Rome, a second possibility is that she is conflating the Roman church with a second church, San Bartolommeo in Pantano, in Barga, near Lucca. If this is the case, then she could be referring to a medieval sculptor, Guido Bigarelli da Como (1238?-1257), who is known to have worked on the pulpit of San Bartolommeo in Pantano. Diana may have been working from a drawing that had only a partial identifying inscription, from which she extrapolated the information included in her own inscription. Her choice of word, “antica” in describing

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<sup>466</sup> Tafuri, “Capriani”, 190.

<sup>467</sup> “Fragmento di un Freggio, et Architraue di una Basilica antica di Roma, ditta hora il Pantano, disegnato da Battista Gioldo da Como, et intagliate da Diana Mantouano del, 1580.”

<sup>468</sup> Bellini, *Scultori*, 237.

the basilica would have been appropriate for either of the two possible churches. While no known part of either church, San Basilio or San Bartolommeo, matches the frieze in Diana's print, it is important to recognize that the frieze is fairly non-descript and could have been taken from any number of buildings. Guido da Como is one name associated with San Bartolommeo in Pantano and Diana may have selected it for this reason. That she did not include his name correctly could also indicate that her source material had only a partial or legible inscription. If this was the case, then it solidifies the supposition that Diana was unlikely to be scaling Roman ruins herself, as her husband surely was, and instead, was fairly dependent on him and other colleagues for source material of this type. All this aside, it is an impressively executed print and sizable. It is also the only of her architectural prints to feature a frieze within its framework, above an architrave.

All four of these prints are similar in size and function very much as a group, despite their differences. They result from a close collaboration between Diana and Francesco, a relationship that they are eager to identify on the fruits of their labors. They likely had lived in Rome for a few years before they produced these prints and demonstrate Francesco's ability to work with ancient models and materials, and Diana's ability to transform them into print in order to make them available for study to a wider audience. They make unusual prints as one would perhaps be more accustomed to seeing this material as part of a book, rather than as loose prints. Francesco and Diana were likely looking to produce an architectural treatise and these prints could have been intended to entice a publisher or patron for the project. Unfortunately, no such project appears to have come to fruition.

In addition to these four prints Diana made after architectural sculpture, she also produced three prints after ancient sculpture, featuring the *Spinario*, a *Hercules* and the so-called *Farnese Bull*.<sup>469</sup> [Figs. 118-120] These were all apparently produced for

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<sup>469</sup> After freestanding classical sculpture, Diana made the *Spinario*, the *Farnese Bull*, and *Hercules*. Of these, the *Spinario* and *Hercules* are most similar, in that they are both shown on their columns: the *Spinario*'s column, which appears to be made of a flecked marble, is truncated so that the bottom portion, base and floor are not pictured. Phyllis Pray Bober and Ruth Rubinstein, *Renaissance Artists and Antique Sculpture* (London and Oxford: Harvey Miller Publishers and Oxford University Press, 1986): 235-6. The sculpture sits between two windows through which clouds are visible. Further, the position of the sculpture in Diana's print allows for a view of the figure's genitals through his legs, charging the print with a risqué quality lacking in many of the other prints of the same sculpture. While this may result from the drawing from which Diana was working, it is striking nonetheless that as a female artist, she would feel comfortable enough to produce the print in this way. Finally, the youth in Diana's print does not truly have the feel of a sculpture: rather, it looks much like her other figures, who are seemingly alive. His hair seems to indicate movement, especially on the right side, as the hair hangs full and light, rather than hanging limply as it does on the bronze sculpture and in the other prints. The sculpture on which her *Hercules* is based, like the *Spinario*, was, and still is, in the collection of the Palazzo dei Conservatori, belonging emphatically not to a private collection, but to the citizens of Rome. Bober and Rubinstein, *Renaissance*, 164-165. Diana's *Hercules* is also on a column, in this case, fully shown, and also placed between two windows, through which one can again see clouds. The *Hercules* is a less successful print in that the sculpture's head is proportionally too small and the facial features pinched and badly rendered. The wall behind the sculpture is covered in dots, but ultimately appears blank and empty, seemingly dwarfing this large bronze sculpture. More care seems to have been given to the rendering of the column than to the figure itself. The near full frontal view necessitates the inclusion of the genitals, apparently not a concern for Diana. The third print Diana made after freestanding classical sculpture is much more complicated than the previous two. Showing the so-called Farnese Bull, which captures the story of Dirce, who died when she was tied to the horns of a bull by her nephews, in retribution for her attempted murder of their mother. Unlike the previous two sculptures, this ancient Hellenistic sculpture is made up of a marble sculpture group of many figures, and was in the private Farnese collection. The sculpture was discovered in 1546 in the Baths of Caracalla and taken into the Farnese collection, eventually making its way to Naples to the National Archaeological Museum. Miranda Marvin, "Freestanding Sculptures from the Baths of Caracalla," *American Journal of Archaeology*, 87 (1987): 349. Its private ownership may explain the way in which Diana has selected to set it; not in a room as with the previous two sculptures, but instead in the open air, with landscape behind it and clouds above it. She has also altered the appearance of the sculpture slightly by shortening its width, most likely in order to accommodate it within the matrix of the plate. Otherwise, she has captured the details accurately, including all of the garlands and baskets in the original sculpture. However, as with the *Spinario*, her figures are relatively lifelike and there is nothing in the image itself that identifies the group as a sculpture. The source for the print is identified instead in the caption on this print, one of only three secular prints to bear a caption. The caption explains the history of the sculpture: "Admire the large sculpture of Dirce, sculpted from one piece of marble by a certain Apollonius from Rhodes, installed in a temple and then transferred to Rome by Asinius, installed in the Antonine baths among the monuments, and now situated in the Farnese palace." ("Ingentem Dircem quam spectas marmore ab uno sculpsit taurisus quondam et Apollonius Diende advecta Rhodo est et Primu[] co[n]dita in aede polio quam Romae struxerat Asinius thermarum inde Antoni inter monume[n]ta reposita at nunc Farnesi Patris in aede sita est.") This narrative caption is written in Latinate capital letters and strongly resembles a Latin inscription, as if affixed to the base of the sculpture group. This likely reflects Diana's experience of her time in Rome, engraving the sculptural pieces that her husband, Francesco, captured, discussed above. The text for this inscription is unique to Diana's print, and may have been the work of Diana herself, one of her contemporaries, or even the publisher, who likely commissioned the work. Affixed to the print, this caption could be seen as an attempt by Diana to promote her own learnedness, demonstrating antiquarian interests.

publication by Lafreri's heir, Claudio Duchetti in 1581, as indicated by the publisher's mark and Diana's signature on all three of the prints. These three prints can often be found in examples of the *Speculum Romanae Magnificentiae*, personalized print collections, which were frequently collected into albums featuring the views, buildings and sculpture of Rome, both ancient and contemporary.<sup>470</sup> They were likely commissioned by Duchetti, however, at least one, the *Farnese Bull*, may have been included in an inventory of items passed from Stefano Duchetti to Claudio Duchetti in 1581, indicating that while Claudio published it, he may not have been the initial commissioner.<sup>471</sup> Unlike a number of Diana's other prints, which do not bear contemporary publisher's marks (as opposed to those from publishers following her death), these prints were made for distinctly commercial purposes, with a very specific buying public in mind. These did not require dedications because they were intended to be a small part of a much larger whole, one of 100, 200 or more prints collated together. And yet, Diana still rendered the subjects as her own with the simple inclusion of a particular stippled background, as seen also in the architectural prints.

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Diana's prints after ancient sculpture are unique to her production in that they include male genitalia. It is possible that the original form of the subjects, sculpture, enabled her to engrave such nudity.

<sup>470</sup> For the *Speculum Romanae Magnificentiae*, see Parshall, "Speculum," 3-27, and H. Hunt [Letwin], "The Duke of Savoy's *Speculum Romanae Magnificentiae* in Norfolk," *Print Quarterly*, 25 (2008): 180. See also the earlier publications devoted to the subject: F. Ehrle, *Roma Prima di Sisto V: la pianta di Roma du Pérac-Lafréry del 1557*, (Rome: Danesi. 1908); C. Huelson, "Das Speculum Romanae Magnificentiae des Antonio Lafreri," *Collectanea variae doctrinae Leoni S. Olschki bibliopolae Florentino* (Munich: J. Rosenthal, 1921): 121-70; L. R. McGinniss, *Catalogue of the Earl of Crawford's "Speculum Romanae Magnificentiae" now in the Avery Architectural Library* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1974); *The Speculum Romanae Magnificentiae of Antonio Lafreri*, Sales Catalogue Bernard Quaritch, London, 1925?; B. Lowry, "Notes on the *Speculum Romanae Magnificentia* and related publications," *Art Bulletin*, 34 (1952): 46-50; S. Bianchi, "Note allo *Speculum Romanae Magnificentiae* di Antonio Lafreri," *Grafica d'Arte*, 4 (1995): 3-8; S. Corsi and P. Ragionieri, *Speculum Romanae Magnificentia: Roma nell'incisione del Cinquecento* (Florence: Mandragora, 2004).

<sup>471</sup> This reference may be to another *Farnese Bull* print not by Diana, but by an anonymous printmaker and released in 1580. Pagani, "Dispersal 1," 8; see also Huelsen, 165, no. 118.

Diana's prints after sculpture in any form each are testament to her ability to reproduce three-dimensional works with close accuracy, creating, in the majority, works that were reproductive. These "sculptural" prints mark Diana's engagement with the Renaissance debate concerning *paragone*, the hierarchical contest between the arts. Working with her husband to engrave these designs, made after three-dimensional "ancient" sculpture, Diana is competing not only with the art of sculpture, but also the generations of artists who precede her. Contemporary discussion may have been a factor in Diana's attempts to make these, and other, engravings after sculpture.<sup>472</sup> While she may have infused her prints after freestanding classical sculpture with some unique elements, each of these prints was based on capturing the work of other artists. These particular prints appear to have been made with a buying public in mind, even if some of

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<sup>472</sup> In addition to these four prints after architectural sculpture, Diana also engraved a print after a stucco designed by Giulio Romano and likely made by her father. The print features a procession of horsemen, dressed in non-descript armor and proceeding over a rocky landscape with one small tree and clouds in the sky beyond. The soldiers carry spears, some with shields, and the final group carries bows and quivers of arrows. The subject of the procession, and indeed the whole room, is a celebration of the Triumph of Sigismondo, who awarded the Marquisate to the Gonzaga family in 1443. Some scholars have linked the *stucchi* with the coming of Charles V to Mantua in 1530, best supported by the emperor's name, "CAROL" written on the shield in the archivolt of the room. Bellini, *Scultori*, 206; Frederick Hartt, *Giulio Romano*, I, (New York: Hacker Art Books, 1958): 147-149. The print is signed "Julius Ro. In. Diana F" (Giulio Romano Inventor, Diana made this), and is one of her five prints that bears the Papal privilege (and date of 1575), dedicated to Scipione Gonzaga. Made a cardinal in 1587, (hence the dedication to "Signore" and not "Cardinale"), Scipione came from the Sabbioneta branch of the family, and spent his youth in the care of Cardinal Ercole Gonzaga. Iain Fenlon, "Cardinal Scipione Gonzaga (1542-93): 'Quel padrone confidentissimo'," *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, 113 (1988): 226. An extremely erudite individual, he was an advisor to Torquato Tasso, and a friend of the church reformers, Carlo Borromeo and Philip Neri. Fenlon, "Scipione", 223 and 236. Thus, with his background in the church, a print featuring a cavalry of horsemen is not an immediately obvious work to dedicate to Scipione. However, at around the time this print was dedicated, Scipione was made the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem. Fenlon, "Scipione", 224. While replete of any religious imagery, the print could nonetheless be taken as a reference to the ongoing quest of the church to protect the status of Jerusalem as a Christian city (in the same way that Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata* could be linked to Scipione as advisor). Certainly, Diana could have selected a more appropriate subject, but perhaps her choices were limited as to which Mantuan designs after Giulio Romano from which she could choose to work. It is also a possibility that Diana made the print without originally intending to dedicate it to Scipione, only doing so after its production, selecting it not for its subject but its fine quality and connection to Giulio Romano. In support of this interpretation is the relatively short dedication: "All' Ill. mo Sig. r. Scipione Gonzaga Diana Mantovana". It is not inscribed into a tablet in a prominent corner as in her print after the Sala di Psiche, but instead carved in two lines in a blank space under the hooves of a horse. For this reason, the dedication appears to post-date the making of the print.

them did not feature ultimately in a commercial project. The quality of these prints after sculpture vary, but were all seemingly made within a fairly close timeframe: from circa 1575 until about 1581. She does not appear to have truly engaged with sculpture prior to this point, nor again afterward. It is likely that her time in Rome inspired her to take on the depiction of sculpture in print, but it is also possible that a person, such as a publisher, her architect husband, or even the nature of the print market in Rome, induced her to begin along this vein. However, her engagement in the ongoing discussions concerning the hierarchy of the arts marks her desire to promote herself as an individual of learning, interested not only in religious subjects, but also in highly specialized antiquarian subjects. Like her contemporaries, Diana sought to further promote her abilities as an artist, demonstrate her access to such materials, and, ultimately, elevate her standing as an erudite individual by producing these prints after sculpture.

### **Exercise in Devotion**

Even in the production of Diana's religious prints, she sought to demonstrate her historical knowledge and intellectual prowess. The events of Diana's life, including her mention in Vasari, her involvement in *I Virtuosi*, the commissioning of her portrait medal, and her Papal privilege were all to benefit her fame and further her impressive career as a printmaker. However, with fame and self-promotion came the need for Diana to secure her reputation. Social decorum likely necessitated that she maintain her modesty and uphold her faith appropriately within her art, especially in her unusual role as a female printmaker.

44 of Diana's 63 prints feature religious subjects, 18 of which are variations of the Virgin and Child, and 21 of which bear a Latin caption. Each of these 18 Virgin and

child prints is traceable or attributed in inscriptions to designs made by other artists, some of whom were contemporaries of Diana. They range in size: the smallest is 6.5 x 5.4 inches and the largest is 18.1 x 13.2 inches. They also range in subject in that some feature just the Virgin, or the Virgin and child, while others include additional people, such as Joseph, John the Baptist and other saints and attendants. These, along with her prints of other saints and religious scenes, appear to have been the mainstay of Diana's career. These religious prints were largely reproductive of the work of other artists and one could surmise that the primary purpose of these prints was to perpetuate the artistic talent and flourishes of the originators, and not necessarily Diana's own artistic reputation.

However, to call Diana's religious prints after other masters "reproductive" does not have to be a negative statement of her abilities. In his life of Goltzius, Karl van Mander emphasizes the artist's ability to assimilate the style of the painter in his engraving, in this case Bartholomew Spranger. Melion observes that "Van Mander converts the print's subject into a eulogy addressed equally to the draughtsman *and* the engraver..."<sup>473</sup> While, in some cases, Diana's engraving is seemingly less nuanced than the original designs from which she was working, such a treatment could also be applicable to Diana's corpus, even her most modest Virgin and child prints. The production of these prints could also be taken as an act of devotion on the part of Diana, which in turn would inspire devotion in the viewers and collectors of the prints.

Eight of these Virgin and Child prints carry captions that seem to have been included from the first state of the prints. Indeed, three of these eight captioned prints were produced in a unique state, and the other five were published in subsequent states

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<sup>473</sup> Melion, "Reproductive", 464.

posthumously, reflecting that the captions date from Diana's production, and were not added by a later publisher.<sup>474</sup> These captions further support a devotional function of the prints; however, they are not verses from the Bible, as one might expect, but seemingly invented and intended to heighten one's experience of the print. Without exception, the captions are all in Latin, are unique to each print, and appear to be unique to Diana's prints, not appearing, it would seem, in any other literary or artistic source. Because these prints vary in size so significantly, it is difficult to see these captioned prints as a set. Instead, the captions may have acted as a hallmark of Diana's later religious prints, especially as they all seem to have been made after her arrival in Rome, between the years of 1576 and 1586.

These captions also worked on a devotional level, encouraging interaction between the viewer and the subject of the prints. It was not unusual for religious prints, especially those made in Northern Europe, to carry Latin inscriptions such as those on Diana's prints. For example, Cornelis Cort's print of the so-called Madonna del Gatto, after Federico Barocci and dated to 1577, bears a narrative inscription, similar to those featured on Diana's prints.<sup>475</sup> [Fig. 121] The composition of these verses fell, at least on some occasions, to men of letters. In correspondence from 1565, Lampsonius wrote to Vasari encouraging the artist to design a series of principal histories from the Old and New Testaments, which would be engraved by a "reliable Flemish engraver," promising to provide "elegant Latin inscriptions."<sup>476</sup>

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<sup>474</sup> Occasionally, a new state is identified: Guido Girondi published a new second state for Diana's *Virgin and Child with St John the Baptist*, released by Nicholas Van Aeslt. (Guido Girondi, "Diana Mantovana's *Virgin and Child with St John the Baptist*," *Print Quarterly*, 29 (2012): 297-9.

<sup>475</sup> For this print, see Melion, "Reproductive", 465.

<sup>476</sup> Melion, "Reproductive", 467; see also Gregory, *Vasari*, 309.



Without exception, the eight captioned Virgin and child prints reproduce the paintings of other artists, some of whom Diana knew personally. While these captions do not change the meaning of the design represented in Diana's prints, they may yet represent an original contribution made by Diana herself, or her collaborators, that deepen the interpretation of each of these prints. The Latin captions are not elegant in their language and are, for the most part, slightly awkward in their construction, which may suggest that a less scholarly individual contributed to their composition. In each case, they appear to narrate the scene, offering further insight into the relationships of those pictured, as well as that of the viewer to the subjects.

In her print of the *Holy Family*, Diana has reproduced and captioned a composition that she had previously engraved and produced without a caption. [Figs. 122 & 123] In the later captioned print, Diana includes an inscription that credits the composition to Francesco Salviati, while the earlier print included only her signature, "Diana". She appears to have made the first print circa 1576-7, although it is undated, and the second is dated 1583.<sup>477</sup> While the figures in each print are the same, the prints are in reverse to each other and the backgrounds are fairly different. The earlier print is longer than the later print, and has a starker landscape with some antique ruins and a single tree, while the later print also has antique ruins, with two rather more verdant trees, including a palm tree, and a mountain in the background. Without an original drawing or painting that is identifiable as the source for Diana's two prints, it is impossible to measure the extent to which Diana added her own contributions to the composition, but it does at least seem likely that Salviati's original did not bear the inscription featured on the second print, which reads: "She gives flowers and fruit to you, famous youth, Virgin: how well

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<sup>477</sup> Bellini, *Scultori*, 188 and 256.

your virginity pleases, so may this work.”<sup>478</sup> Through the inscription, the print becomes an offering made by Diana, as well as the viewer, just as the fruit and flowers are given to the Christ child within the print.

None of the other captioned prints refer meta-thematically to the making of the print, making the caption on this print the most thought provoking. However, the captions may still offer assistance in the interpretation of the prints. Evoking the universal relationship between mother and child, Diana’s print after Salviati’s *Madonna and Child*, with an angel in the background bears just such a caption. [Fig. 109] Dated 1576, the print is, according to a second caption on the print, based on another work by Salviati, now unknown (“Francesco Salviati inventor, Diana Mantov Romae incidebat, 1576”). Mariette claims to have seen a drawing that may be related, however, this drawing has been untraceable since.<sup>479</sup> The narrative caption, which reads: “The earth cannot contain such a sea, such a world, or the highest heavens, here, the gulf is closed by the mother.”<sup>480</sup> In the print, the Virgin Mary affectionately embraces a toddler Christ child, supporting his head as he nuzzles closely to her face and plays with some drapery at her neck. The tenderness displayed in their faces is touching and the caption, which evokes the universal relationship between mother and child, fits the scene well.

This print was produced in a unique state, meaning that the posthumous publishers who acquired many of Diana’s plates either were unable to buy this particular plate, or uninterested in re-issuing it. However, the plate was relatively small, with the print measuring just 8 x 6.6 inches (204 x 168 mm). This print was not intended as a grand picture, but was relatively modest. It may, perhaps, have been an appropriate gift to

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<sup>478</sup> “Dat flores fructusq[ue] tibi, puer inclyte, Virgo: Quam bene virginitas sic operosa placet.”

<sup>479</sup> Bellini, *Scultori*, 215-6.

<sup>480</sup> “Quem mare, quem tellus coeli quem maximus orbis non capiunt, matris clauditur ecce sinu.”

give to a new mother, celebrating the special relationship between mother and child. The inclusion of the angel in the background makes an otherwise elegant print slightly awkward. The angel, which was carved in lower and less detailed relief, appears to be collecting fruit from a palm tree. According to Bellini, the angel places the episode during the flight into Egypt, and references the apocryphal gospel from Pseudo-Matthew.<sup>481</sup> While one does not want to overemphasize such a point, it is compelling to note that Diana, having recently married, may herself have been embarking on just such a relationship with a new baby.<sup>482</sup>

The Latin captions on these two prints, and those on so many of her other prints, add an extra dimension to Diana's prints, transforming them from simple religious images to works that require viewer participation and engagement. While only one caption really appears to refer meta-thematically to the making of the print, they are each a fusion of self-promotion and promotion of the original designer. Both of these prints, and indeed most of the captioned prints, are based on original compositions that are now lost. None of these prints appear to have been published by a commercial publisher and instead, appear to have been self-published, or perhaps released in collaboration with Diana's brother, Adamo. It is difficult to say whether the composition of the captions, or even the lettering, was done by Diana, but the captions indisputably contribute an additional layer to the interpretation of the prints.

In total, 24 of Diana's prints include a narrative caption, 21 of which are religious in subject. These captions all appear at the bottom of the print and are in keeping with the production of her contemporaries such as Cornelis Cort and Goltzius. In addition to

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<sup>481</sup> Bellini, *Scultori*, 216.

<sup>482</sup> Diana had at least one son, christened Giovan Battista, named after her father, in 1578; he was baptized on 2 September in the parish of Sant'Agostino. (Tafari, "Francesco", 190.)

the eight prints featuring the Virgin and child, and the various prints of individual saints, there are additional captioned religious prints, for example, the *Annunciation*, the *Visitation*, an *Ecce Homo*, and a *Deposition*. The inclusion of the captions on all of these prints appears to have been an attempt at a branding exercise, unifying a seemingly disparate collection of prints that range in size, styles and, perhaps most importantly, source material.

### **“I confess to having underestimated her”: Conclusion**

In her work, Diana seems to promote herself as an equal to, if not one who surpasses, her male contemporaries, both in knowledge of subject matter as well as in technical skill. Through her choice of subjects and the texts such as dedications and captions, she looked to emphasize her knowledge just as much as her technical expertise, called a “thing to marvel at” by Vasari.<sup>483</sup> If acceptance by her colleagues was something that Diana desired, then one need look no further than her impressive list of source artists, such as the Zuccari, to appreciate the way in which she was embedded in the artistic life of Rome. Further evidence of her good reputation and the respect with which her contemporaries regarded her can be found in two surviving portraits of Diana. The first is a chalk drawing by Federico Zuccaro (1540/1-1609) [Fig. 124] and the second, an engraving by Cherubino Alberti [Fig. 125]. Zuccaro’s drawing is thought to date from the 1580s, when Diana was in her 30s.<sup>484</sup> While Zuccaro’s drawing is lacking a label, there

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<sup>483</sup> Vasari, *Lives*, vol. 8, 42.

<sup>484</sup> Lorand Zentai, “Portrait inconnu de Diana Scultori,” *Bulletin du Musée Hongrois des Beaux Arts*, 62 (1984): 48. Pagani confirmed Diana’s birthdate of around 1547 through a *Stato d’anime* of 1596, which stated that the artist was 49 in 1596. Unfortunately Pagani does not include a transcript of the original Italian document, so I am dependent on her English translations. Pagani, “Review”, 85. (As cited from Archivio Storico del Vicariato di Roma, S. Agostino, Stati d’anime 1595-1596, fol. 33.) Additionally, one could use Vasari’s reference to ascertain a probable birth date of 1547, given that he supposedly met her when she was 19, which would have been in 1566, two years before he published the second edition of his *Vite*.

is a remarkable similarity between the drawing and Cherubino's labeled engraving.<sup>485</sup> In Cherubino's portrait of Diana, she appears to be about 60-65 years old, close to the age at which she died at 65. Cherubino, likely a friend to Diana, was originally from Borgo San Sepolcro and was well known in Rome, along with the rest of his extended family, who pursued successful careers as painters and engravers.<sup>486</sup> Cherubino's portrait of Diana may have been issued at her death, or, if in life, possibly intended to join a group of engraved portraits. One such example would be the printed *museo* intended by Alonso Chacon, which would have been a "publication of an engraved gallery of 500 portraits of the illustrious".<sup>487</sup> In a letter from about 1561, Chacon requested an engraved portrait from Lavinia Fontana and perhaps Diana's engraving was intended for just such a publication.<sup>488</sup>

Despite living until 1612, Diana may have stopped engraving as early as 1588, given that there is no surviving print by her hand that is dated past 1588. Previous scholars have suggested that she stopped engraving altogether at this time owing to an arm injury, based on a suggestion propagated by Francesco Milizia made in 1768, and included as recently as 2000 by Lincoln. This suggestion could be supported by the caption on her last dated print, the *Deposition* [Fig. 126], which reads: "Lord, regard my affliction," a possible meta-thematic reference to her malady.<sup>489</sup> It seems odd that Diana stopped engraving in her early 40s, and Lincoln suggests that she stopped because

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<sup>485</sup> Zentai, "Portrait", 46.

<sup>486</sup> Diana and Francesco were likely friends with Cherubino and other members of the Alberti Family. When they had their son, Giovan Battista, in 1578, he was baptized on 2 September in the parish of Sant'Agostino, with Durante Alberti as the child's godfather. Christopher Witcombe, "Some Letters and Some Prints Dedicated to the Medici by Cherubino Alberti," *Sixteenth Century Journal*, 22 (1991): 641, n. 3.

<sup>487</sup> King, "Sight", 401-2.

<sup>488</sup> King, "Sight", 401-2.

<sup>489</sup> "VIDE DOMINE MEA AFFLICTIONE."

Francesco was making enough money to support them generously.<sup>490</sup> While Diana may well have produced more prints after 1588 and chosen not to sign or date them, this seems highly unlikely. The text, including dates, that grace so many of Diana's prints were a hallmark of her engravings, and to revert to producing prints without such words would be, effectively, to deny her authorship. Throughout her career, she worked in order that her prints and authorship be recognized and to negate this would be an unlikely move away from her previous *modus operandi*. Whether due to an ailment or another reason, Diana appears to have released her final engraving, *The Deposition*, in 1588.<sup>491</sup>

A few months after delivering a lecture to *I Virtuosi* in 1594, Francesco died unexpectedly in their house on the via della Stelletta, on 15 September.<sup>492</sup> While he and Diana were living in the Campo Marzio, he was buried at Trinita de Monti, as reflected in a document noted by Pagani.<sup>493</sup> His coffin was accompanied by a procession of the members "of brothers from the confraternity and a large number of other citizens".<sup>494</sup>

Roughly two years later, on 24 November, 1596, Diana married her second husband, Giulio Pelosi, also an architect, in her parish church of St. Trifone, and moved to his house in the Corso.<sup>495</sup> Pelosi was about 20 years her junior and in order for him to marry her, she no doubt had a large dowry.<sup>496</sup> It was not uncommon for a widow to

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<sup>490</sup> Lincoln, "Impression", 1131.

<sup>491</sup> Lincoln suggests that Orazio Pacifico published the print initially, and was likely responsible for adding the caption. Lincoln, *Invention*, 143-4. This is highly unlikely given that Orazia Pacifico was not born until circa 1580, eight years before this print was dated and issued in the second state, complete with the caption. Orazio Pacifico's address does not appear until the third state. On Pacifico, see Bury, *Print*, 230; Pagani, "Review," 76.

<sup>492</sup> Pagani, "Mantovana", 85. The date of his death was erroneously reported by the *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani*, based on the date presented by F. Noack as 15 February 1594. Tafuri, "Francesco", 195.

<sup>493</sup> Pagani, "Review", 85.

<sup>494</sup> "da nostri confratelli oltre l'infinito nr.o di molti popolari". Pagani, "Review", 85. (As cited from Archivio dell'Accademia dei Virtuosi al Pantheon, Verbali delle Congregazioni, 1543-87, "Nomi de Confratelli".)

<sup>495</sup> Pagani, "Review", 75.

<sup>496</sup> Pagani, "Review", 75.

remarry a younger man, as was the case with Giovanni Giacomo De Rossi and widow Chiara d'Amica, who was in her early 40s, thirteen years his senior and who possessed a large dowry.<sup>497</sup> On 30 April, 1598 Pelosi gained Roman citizenship, a privilege, which may have extended to Diana, who was already an honorary citizen of Volterra through Francesco. According to documents in the Archivio Storico del Vicariato di Roma, Diana was buried on 5 April, 1612, likely without the procession and funeral that Francesco had received.<sup>498</sup>

There is no trace of a will by Diana, however, her second husband's will survives and there is no mention of plates and engravings, which likely suggests that he sold all of her copper plates before his death, or alternatively, that they were all passed directly to Diana's son.<sup>499</sup> Judging by the way in which the plates were used heavily for re-publications after Diana's death (but not by other publishers before), a path traceable through the publisher's marks on the re-issued prints, it is clear that her copper plates were sold on at the end of her life or directly following her death.

Diana's career was inevitably more complicated because of her gender, however, it is clear that she excelled as a printmaker, both technically and according to the esteem of her contemporaries, artistic or otherwise. While she may not have had the opportunity or ability to create a great number of original compositions like her father, she does not appear to have made her prints without a measure of originality: filling in her backgrounds and altering images to better suit the print medium and perhaps, her

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<sup>497</sup> Francesca Consagra, "De Rossi and Falda: A Successful Collaboration in the Print Industry of Seventeenth-Century Rome," *The Craft of Art*, ed. Andrew Ladis and Carolyn Wood (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1995): 195.

<sup>498</sup> Pagani, "Review", 85. (As cited from Archivio Storico del Vicariato di Roma, S. Lorenzo in Lucina, Lib. Mort., 1606-33, fol. 126.)

<sup>499</sup> Pagani, "Review", 76. Diana and Francesco had their son, Giovan Battista, in 1578; he was baptized on 2 September in the parish of Sant'Agostino. According to the baptismal records, Durante Alberti was the child's godfather. Tafuri, "Francesco", 190.

intended contextualization of certain scenes within the events of her day. Diana sought to re-compose the masterful work of her predecessors and contemporaries in many of her prints, an exercise to which she most certainly alludes in her dedication in the *Feast of the Gods*. In doing so, she demonstrated her skill at manipulating the models from which she worked. Following the model set by her father, she sought to encourage her viewers to examine the prints closely and as reflections of the “originals” on which they were based, armed with the knowledge that comes from “initiation” into her world.

Her dedications allowed her to present her work to various potential patrons while creating prints from drawings to which she had apparently easy access, and to emphasize her personal connections with many of the finest sixteenth-century artists, including Giulio Romano, Francesco Salviati, Federico Zuccaro and Durante Alberti. Her personal and professional network is demonstrated through her prints and source material, as well as her admission into *I Virtuosi*. The portraits made of her by Cherubino Alberti and Federico Zuccaro could both be taken as an indication of her fame within the artistic community in Rome, while her mention in Vasari solidified her place among her contemporaries. Unfortunately, despite knowledge of her network and the documents concerning her life, a single element in her printmaking process remains a mystery.

The way in which she published and circulated her prints is still largely unconfirmed. Of her 63 prints, a staggering 54 prints appear to have been self-published.<sup>500</sup> These do not bear a publisher’s mark from within her lifetime, which typically indicate the commissioner and owner of the plate. The absence of this on so many of her prints suggests that she herself, or an agent with whom she was close,

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<sup>500</sup> Based on the assumption that states of prints that were published within her lifetime and do not have a publisher’s mark on them were not released by a commercial publisher such as Antonio Lafreri, one of a few publishers who appears to have released her work during her life.



perhaps Adamo, handled the publishing and distribution of her prints. That so many of her plates appear to have been sold off late in her life further indicates that she retained control of these plates. The reasons that Diana may have held on to her plates and self-published are plentiful, but her application for the Papal privilege seem to suggest that she was extremely protective of her material. It is also likely that, in working after the model set up by her father in Mantua, Diana was aware that retaining the plates meant that they could be a consistent revenue source, and prints could be issued and re-issued on an on-demand basis. Finally, print-publishers do not seem to have been held in the highest regard by most of Diana's contemporaries. Beyond the disparaging criticism by Paolo Graziano of Lafreri and his "counterfeiting," Vasari appears to have avoided mentioning print-publishers in his *Vite*, mentioning them only when absolutely necessary, so as not to credit them with the praise that rightly belongs to the printmakers and designers.<sup>501</sup> The second and third states of so many of her prints bear the marks of publishers who post-date Diana's life, suggesting that there was a commercial interest in many of her prints long after she died.

Diana's prints, especially those made after her move to Rome, include a great deal of text in the form of captions, dedications, and signatures. This text protected her professional interests, laid out her artistic network and genealogy, and helped to demonstrate her claim to learning. To be mentioned in such a flattering light by Vasari at such a young age was not only an enormous honor, but likely a burden for a young, female artist. No doubt the praise lavished on Diana's *Feast of the Gods* print by Francesco Peranda, who said, "that banquet of the Gods is a stupendous thing; so much so that I, who had the highest opinion of her, remain overwhelmed by her merit, and I

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<sup>501</sup> Gregory, *Vasari*, 31.

confess to having underestimated her,”<sup>502</sup> was representative of the critiques of Diana’s artistry. However, such praise could also represent a notion that Diana needed to continually promote: that she could engrave just as well as any of her male contemporaries and that she infused her work with an intellect well beyond that expected of her.

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<sup>502</sup> “quel convivio dei Dei è cosa stupenda; tal che io, che tenevo grandissima opinione di lei [Diana] resto superato del valor suo, et confesso, che ne portavo concetto inferiore al merito” G.F. Peranda, “Lettere del Signor Giovanni Francesco Peranda” (Venice: Barezzo Barezzi, 1609): 106-107; Pagani dates it to June 1578. Pagani, “Review,” 82. Translated and cited in Bury, *Print*, 107.

## **Conclusion**

The prints produced by each of these four printmakers celebrate the near unique merits of engraving and represent a variety of intended audiences and functions. These qualities include the portability of works on paper, the relative affordability of prints, and finally, the tangible physical efforts required to make such engravings, evidenced by the strokes of, and references to, the burin within the prints. The way in which these printmakers celebrated such qualities ranged from the meta-thematical references to burins and carving in the prints by Giovanni Battista and Giorgio Ghisi, to the prints after sculpture by Adamo and Diana. Ultimately, their prints emphasize a potential for printmaking, exploring the great power that pictures in print might hold, when examined by a knowing, even initiated, viewer.

In countless examples, these four printmakers drew on contemporary events to embellish their prints with novel and subtle interpolations often not present in their source material. In doing so, they imbued their prints with multiple layers of meaning and references that would appeal to a circle of individuals who possessed the necessary knowledge, transforming them into “hinges.” The beauty of these prints lies, in no small part, in their multiple meanings. Whilst political or social commentary was there for interpretation, one could still appreciate the subjects on their most basic levels, as a Virgin and Child, or biblical event.

In the case of each of the printmakers examined here, one encounters a difficulty in determining the extent of their original contributions to the composition of their prints, especially when the source material no longer survives and is presumed lost, perhaps as a result of the engraving process. The absence of this material has facilitated a systematic

assumption on the part of scholars that the missing source material was closely adhered to by the printmakers. In 1793, George Cumberland commented on the difficulty of identifying autograph drawings executed by printmaker, Giulio Bonasone and his peers, saying:

Indeed, how shall we expect to find drawings of engravers when we reflect what they suffer in the workshop in copying, and how little they in general value them when copied on copper...in which operation, as they must necessarily lose much, even in the best hands, it is never in the interest of the engraver to preserve that which serves only to expose his insufficiency.<sup>503</sup>

Cumberland's observation about the necessary destruction of such material is not entirely inaccurate, however, that a printmaker should wish to "obscure" his insufficiencies is not likely to be applicable here. If anything, the *incisori Mantovani* would have wished for the survival of such material in order to facilitate the measurement of their creative contributions in the designs of their prints. For them, the very status of engraving within the artistic and creative hierarchy was at stake, and they sought consistently and systematically to demonstrate the unique nuances possible in their artistic practice.

A significant catalyst that facilitated such creative contributions for these four printmakers was the relative independence that they maintained throughout the majority of their careers in printmaking. That they seem to have retained most of their plates and controlled the process from start to finish, at least in Mantua, and probably in Rome, with Adamo's assistance, meant that they were less reliant on the demands of publishers. As a result, they held more responsibility in distributing their prints and ensuring their commercial success. The fact that many of their prints, Diana's especially, were re-issued

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<sup>503</sup> George Cumberland, *Some Anecdotes of the Life of Giulio Bonasone*, (London, 1793): 43, as cited in Thomas Ketelsen, "A Drawing for Giulio Bonasone's Print after Titian's 'Entombment'," *The Burlington Magazine*, 138 (1996): 448.

posthumously, suggests a continued demand for them, attests to their ongoing success, and reinforces the great value of the plates themselves.

A pioneering printmaker, Giovanni Battista forged the path for an independent printmaking model, exploring engraving as an opportunity to express his creative impulses and to occasionally supplement his income. In doing so, he looked to re-frame historical and mythological subjects within a new context, asserting that printmaking could be a creative process. Overshadowed by the influences of Giulio Romano and Michelangelo, among others, he looked to conquer these influences and subvert them into his own compositions.

Especially significant to his printmaking corpus were the prints that he made that commemorated the interests and victories of the Gonzaga family. His *Naval Battle* from 1538, so rightly recognized by Lomazzo as a paradigm for other artists, and which has, very deliberately, consternated scholars for centuries, might be taken as a stupendous tribute to Ferrante Gonzaga's contributions in the Tunis campaign of 1535. Despite Vermeyen's monopoly, Giovanni Battista's version of the campaign was seemingly ambiguous enough to elude the parameters of the monopoly. Not only did Giovanni Battista arrange this print to team with action amplified by subtle identifying elements, but he crafted the scene in the poetic context of the *Argonautica* and Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*. Charles V leads his new Argonauts to victory, with the loyal assistance of Ferrante in the guise of Hercules. Even still, the action itself and elusive identification of the individuals in the print simultaneously allowed for the print to be recommended by Lomazzo as a model for use by other artists. With this print, Giovanni Battista becomes the poet, a visionary who captures the timeless human desire to conquer and triumph.

In the same year, Giovanni Battista celebrated Isabella d'Este and her collecting habits with his *Sleeping Cupid*. This small treasure, utilizing the poetic tropes surrounding this diminutive god, celebrates Isabella's own beauty and simultaneously, the artist's great talent in creating such beauty. Giovanni Battista's Cupid was not a reproduction of an ancient or contemporary prototype, such as those crafted by Praxiteles or Michelangelo, but it drew on the mythology surrounding such sculptures. In the hope that such a print might not only celebrate Isabella and appeal to a literate and international audience, Giovanni Battista sought to amplify his own fame with an image that might be circulated as a multiple, demonstrating one way in which the burin is mightier than the chisel.

Emphasizing the modest, yet powerful stature of David, Giovanni Battista celebrated the power of the sword and the burin in his *David and Goliath* from 1540. While Giovanni Battista's "sword" cuts copper plate, he once again takes on his artistic giants, most especially Giulio Romano. In these, and many other prints, he sought to demonstrate the virtues of engraving, while also promoting his other extensive talents, including his metal-working, as well as his sophisticated approach to art making. To his legacy should be added an appreciation for the complex way in which he celebrated contemporary events and people, veiled within the context of historical and mythological subjects.

Adamo, a technically less accomplished engraver, built on the experiences of his father and enslaved himself to the creations of others. He capitalized on the demand for prints after the works of such artists as Michelangelo, making sets of engravings that could be acquired presumably cheaply and with ease. A seemingly canny businessman,

he identified a demand for printed reproductions of carved gems, showing that engraving was an ideal medium for capturing these eminently desirable collectables.

His corpus, perhaps more than any other printmaker examined here, demonstrates the significant cache of source material, presumably drawings, from which these *incisori Mantovani* could seek inspiration. Not only does he seem to have had access to designs for the Palazzo Te, but also to a great number of drawings after the Sistine work by Michelangelo, and to images of ancient carved gems, likely all made available through Giovanni Battista. This cache, and indeed the plates made by his father, sister and Ghisi probably formed the contribution that he made to his short-lived partnership with Antonio Lafreri. Very tellingly, none of his own prints, nor those by the others, appear to have been published by Lafreri's heirs, suggesting that he repossessed these plates after the dissolution of the partnership in 1576. Even more importantly, one of these by Ghisi, *The Vision of Ezekiel*, was published later by Blanco, the second husband of Adamo's widow, suggesting that not only were plates restored to him in 1576, but retained by him and passed on to his wife upon his death. The path that these plates appear to have taken seem to support conclusively the suggestion that Adamo contributed plates and drawings to his partnership with Lafreri. Despite the independence that such a cache might have granted Adamo, he was still enslaved to other artists. However, his was perhaps a better fate than that of Ghisi, who, at least at the end of his life, suffered as a slave to "a prince", "straining to acquire a [piece of] bread."<sup>504</sup>

Throughout his career, Giorgio Ghisi sought to explain the relationship an artist might have in the process of "re-animation," like God, bringing figures to life with his

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<sup>504</sup> *Lettere*, II, 226.

burin. His *Vision of Ezekiel* deals with this exploration most literally, but many other prints within his corpus also appear to demonstrate his ongoing consideration of this. While he seems to have designed only a very limited number of potentially original prints during his career, he found ways in which to insert his own details, even transforming the subjects of his prints from their original, intended subjects.

His *Plight of the Artist*, the so-called *Allegory of Life*, could be taken in a number of different, equally compelling ways. Ghisi's insertion of two unrelated quotes from Virgil's *Aeneid* suggests that the artist was working to create an invention inspired by this fabricated dialogue, wherein an unhappy, stationary figure is encouraged to be brave and work to overcome adversities. Not only could this dialogue encourage a viewer to take this print as a creative depiction of the ways in which an artist might be tormented by his attempts at re-animating nature, but also as an exploration of how an artist might depict the ongoing theological debate concerning free will. His clever, and rather misleading, identification of the late Raphael as the inventor of the composition, recalls the cult of genius surrounding the master, while also tracing his artistic genealogy. It is Michelangelo, however, and not Raphael, who is probably evoked by the bearded "artist." While Raphael may be upheld as the personification of "*sprezzatura*," Michelangelo is pictured as one tormented by personal demons. Each, Raphael, Michelangelo and Ghisi pursued their art with the single-minded goal of capturing beauty.

His copious travels worked favorably for Ghisi at least in the creation of his beautiful landscapes in the background of so many of his "reproductive" prints. So evocative at times that they overshadow the perceived subjects, these landscapes could be



seen to represent amalgams of his many homes. His pendantive *Venus and Adonis* and *Angelica and Medoro* similarly engage the viewer, testing their knowledge of ancient mythology and renaissance poetry, creating hierarchies of knowledge within and outside of the print. The knowing looks of Adonis and the putto challenge the viewer in their knowledge, while the happy absorption of *Angelica and Medoro* celebrate Ghisi's own act of carving.

A swansong print, his *Martyrdom of St Barbara*, marks Ghisi's attempts to explore the theme of re-animation even at the end of his life and within the parameters of a commission. Dioscorus's sword, a weapon of destruction (but also the tool of St Barbara's own ascension), celebrates Ghisi's act of creation, both as an engraver, and also as a damascener of armor. His fusion of multiple influences, including that of Raphael, indisputably a favored figure in Ghisi's corpus, as well as Northern prints that he likely accessed during his own time in Antwerp, demonstrate his remarkable ability to draw from many, very different, sources. His dedication to historical accuracy (or naturalism), visible in his adherence to Balkan dress in the figures responsible for St Barbara's martyrdom testifies to his desire to assert his own contributions in the making of his prints.

Finally, Diana used texts, in the form of dedications and narrative captions from circa 1575 onwards to set her prints apart and imbue them with a lettered quality. With these texts, and the alterations that she made to the composition of her prints, she was asserting her own erudite qualities, insisting upon her deservedness of being initiated into the ranks of learned individuals. Her application for a Papal privilege, her initiation into *I*

*Virtuosi*, and the commissioning of her portrait medal each attest to her quest for this goal and her successes.

Her corpus represents a consistent desire to achieve and communicate her status as an initiate: as a Mantuan in the service of the Gonzaga, as a Roman, familiar with and with access to the Papal court, and finally, literally, as a woman of letters. Her *Feast of the Gods* celebrates each of these processes of initiation, challenging the viewer to prove their own status as one initiated into these complex worlds.

Her dedications, so long and complicated, offer the viewer multiple, although not exclusive, readings of her prints. Especially relevant in her *Christ and the Adulteress*, she engages the viewer in a consideration of the themes of forgiveness, redemption and adultery, casting the primary figure, the adulteress, in a contemporary light. A celebration of the saintliness of the dedicatee's sister, this unusual subject required a certain level of contemporary knowledge in order for the print to be fully appreciated.

The architectural and sculptural prints that Diana made for a brief period in her career should be taken as attempts to elevate her status as a sophisticated artist, and to broaden her corpus to encompass books. Her working relationship with her first husband was just as important as that with her father and brother, and while Francesco has only been considered in a necessarily cursory manner here, he likely facilitated a great many of her later projects.

Finally, her many religious prints, especially those that carry poetic narrative captions, represent her attempt to imbue even the most everyday of subjects with a deeper element. These prints, which had the potential to be the most popular in their function, fulfilled the expectation placed upon Diana to demonstrate her devotion in her art. Her

final captioned print, the *Deposition*, perhaps unintentionally, marks the end of her printmaking, but, thankfully, not the issuing of her art, which continued well into the seventeenth century, due in no small part to the canny way in which she controlled her plates.

At least three of these printmakers were likely affected by the fire of 1550 that appears to have destroyed their *casa degli stampatori*. This hitherto unconnected document suggests that such a fire had serious consequences for Giovanni Battista, who appears to have lost many of his plates, and possibly even some of his prints.<sup>505</sup> Giorgio Ghisi and Adamo may have lost their early prints or plates. Given that Giovanni Battista does not appear to have made any prints after 1551, the fire may even have signaled the end of his own engraving career.

While Giulio Romano was not likely to have been involved in the printmaking process directly, his drawings and designs had a significant effect on these four artists. They, and more specifically, Giovanni Battista, had amassed a selection of drawings from which he and his successors drew inspiration. These drawings were an important asset for Adamo on his transfer to Rome, for Ghisi as he sought his fame outside of Mantua, and for Diana, as she established herself as a woman of letters. Each in their own way built their artistic genealogy on the shoulders of Giulio Romano, without adhering to his production exactly.

With their multiple references to their art, engraving, and its tool, the burin, the *incisori Mantovani* sought to call attention to their mastery of their artistic process and over nature itself. According to the observations of Smith, they were not alone in seeking

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<sup>505</sup> Albricci, "Incisioni," 13; 15.

to “remake themselves as practitioners of the liberal arts.”<sup>506</sup> On the most basic level, the attempts and successes of Adamo, Giorgio Ghisi and Diana to involve themselves in book projects speaks to their desire to become men of letters, demonstrating not only their “artisanal literacy,” but also their actual literacy. However, it was not just their knowledge of sophisticated images and classical texts that assisted them in this claim. Rather, it was their ability to manipulate their source material and insert their own legible details to transform their compositions into “hinges” with which multiple meanings could be posited that speaks to their “literacy.”

Further study of the works by the *incisori Mantovani* and their contemporaries, especially the printmaker Vico, will likely reveal further examples of multi-valent prints, and assist in a better understanding of the legibility and efficacy of multiple readings. The *incisori Mantovani* were neither alone nor the first group of artists to seek ways in which to challenge their “reproductive” art. Print studies, and the discipline of art history, would benefit from a consideration of other artists, earlier and later, who pushed the boundaries of this medium and sought to include some original contributions in the engraving of works by other masters. Throughout this dissertation, Cardinal Granvelle has made many tantalizing appearances and his interest in prints may also make for fruitful future research. Finally, a study devoted to meta-thematic references to the art and process of engraving might reveal that the *incisori Mantovani* were hardly alone in their desire to call attention to their efforts with and mastery over the burin.

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<sup>506</sup> Smith, *Body*, 27.

In a 1576 commentary on Aristotle's *Poetics*, Lodovico Castelvetro suggested that "borrowed matter" is to be "greatly admired in painting."<sup>507</sup> Half a century later, Emanuele Tesauro suggested in his treatise on metaphor and wit, the *Cannochiale aristotelico*, that:

In imitation, one must not copy witty expressions exactly as they are, but that one must change the grammatical structure so that the metaphor is no longer the same and yet it is the same: old in substance and new in manner.<sup>508</sup>

While intended to aid in an understanding of visual quotations in painting, the above observations might be even more relevant to the art of engraving, and indeed to the *incisori Mantovani* especially. The multiple layers of meaning within their prints allowed them an opportunity to surpass those whom they emulated, giving their audience a chance to enjoy the pleasure of expertise: of understanding the events and people captured and referenced in the prints. They often changed the grammatical structure of their originals, transforming old into new.

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<sup>507</sup> Andrew Bongiorno, *Castelvetro On the Art of Poetry: an Abridged Translation of Lodovico Castelvetro's Poetica D'aristotele Vulgarizzata E Sposta* (Binghamton: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1984): 276.

<sup>508</sup> Maria Low, "Originals, Reproductions, and a 'Particular Taste' for Pastiche in the Seventeenth-Century Republic of Painting," *Mapping Markets for Paintings in Europe, 1450-1750*, eds. Neil De Marchi and Hans J. van Miegroet (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006): 255.

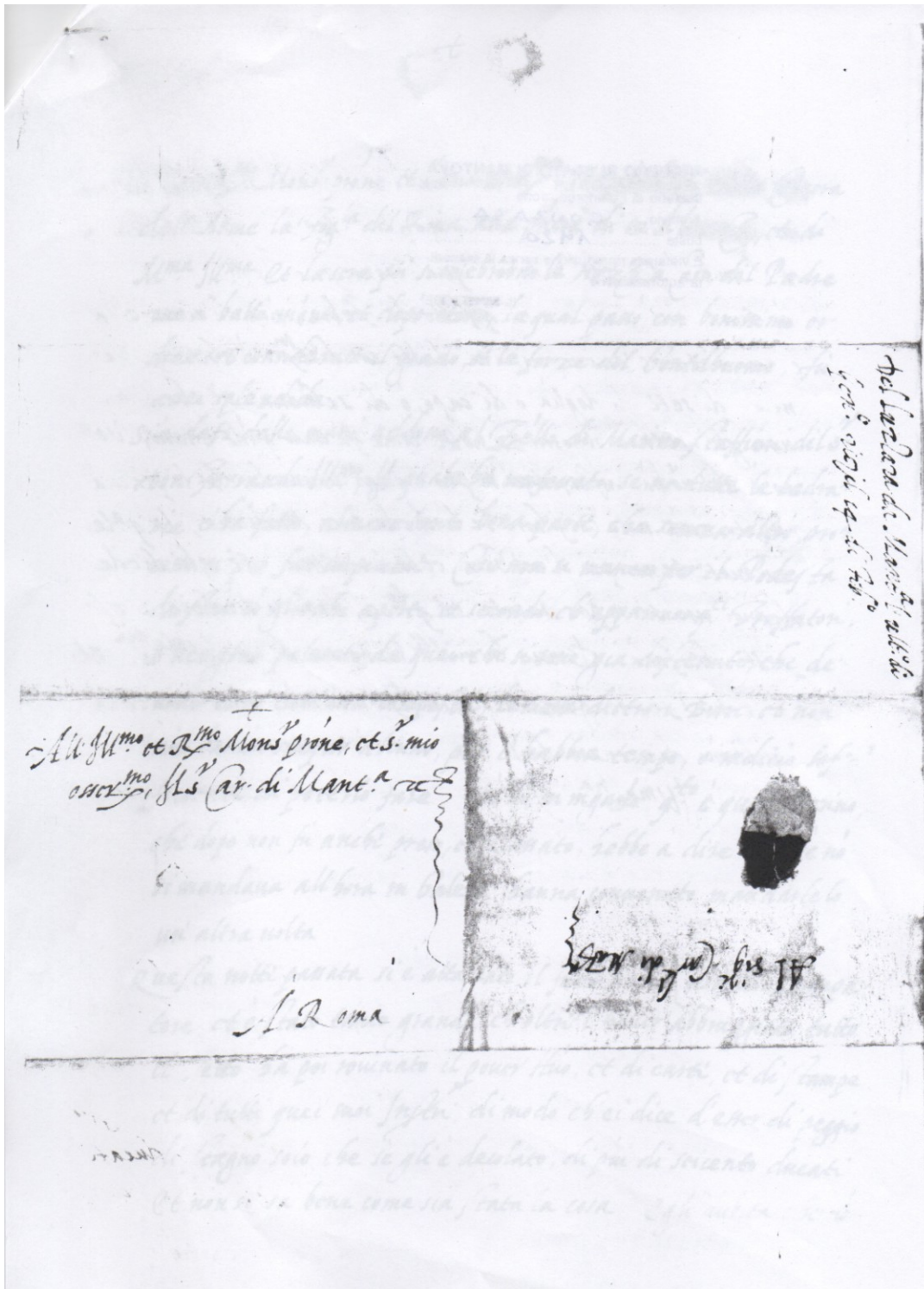
**1550 Letter from Giovanni Maria Luzzara, to Cardinal Ercole  
Gonzaga, 31 January, 1550, Archivio de Stato, Mantua, Archivio Gonzaga, XI.2**

Questa notte passata si è attaccato il fuoco nella Casa del Stampatore, et è stato tanto grande ch'oltri l'huor abbruggiato tutto il Tetto ha poi rovinato il pover Huo, et di case, et di stampe et di tutti quei suoi infreni di modo ch'ei dice d'esser di peggio di peggio solo che se gli è decelato di più di seicento ducati et non si sa bene come sia stata la cosa. Egli dubita che no



na stato fatto a posta et per chiarezza di ciò si è posto di già  
in pregonne uno di que suoi compositori sopra il quale ha un po-  
cca d'ombra per certi indici i quali sono pero lieti  
Et si dica non si manda mai affetto di Febre, non di moria alla  
e non retta e accompagnata dalle condite<sup>m</sup> co' che qual ve-  
nie, di seti di doglia o di capo, o di schiena, et che è più  
non gli uiceta il riposo la notte come fanno gli altri et uno, Ve-  
ro e che non si gusta, et non si può trouar uinanda che lo giucua  
questo notte alle xij hore se li dioda una Mediana, la q<sup>le</sup>  
na può tener più d'una hora, et ha uicet<sup>m</sup> Se gli diode  
di più uno sciroppo tanto, et q<sup>to</sup> si bami a uedere l'ef-  
fetto che farà. Grazia humil<sup>te</sup> la mano di V. S. M<sup>na</sup>, et  
alla sua Felice graziauerente<sup>te</sup> mirata, et benedicta  
= In l'ultima di Genaro del 1600. M<sup>na</sup> Maria Lu<sup>ca</sup> T<sup>ra</sup>  
humil<sup>te</sup> et deuot<sup>is</sup> s<sup>u</sup>a

Humil<sup>te</sup> et deuot<sup>is</sup> s<sup>u</sup>a  
M<sup>na</sup> Maria Lu<sup>ca</sup> T<sup>ra</sup>



Del lazzaretto di Napoli 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100.

Alte. M<sup>mo</sup> et R<sup>mo</sup> Mons<sup>r</sup> pr<sup>o</sup>nc, et S<sup>r</sup> mio  
osce<sup>mo</sup>, S<sup>r</sup> Car. di Mant.<sup>a</sup> et

Al sig. Car. di Mant.<sup>a</sup>

[ Roma



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